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THE ADVENTURE OF
LADY URSULA

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THE ADVENTURE OF LADY URSULA

A COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS

By
ANTHONY HOPE

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THE ADVENTURE OF LADY URSULA

This play was originally produced at the Duke of York's Theatre, London, on Tuesday, October 11, 1898, with the following cast :—

THE EARL OF HASSENDEN	<i>Mr. Percy Lyndal.</i>
SIR GEORGE SYLVESTER .	<i>Mr. Herbert Waring.</i>
THE REV. MR. BLIMBOE .	<i>Mr. George Raiemond.</i>
MR. DENT	<i>Mr. Chas. Fulton.</i>
MR. CASTLETON	<i>Mr. Cosmo Stuart.</i>
MR. DEVEREUX	<i>Mr. J. C. Buckstone.</i>
MR. WARD	<i>Mr. Sam Sothern.</i>
SIR ROBERT CLIFFORD .	<i>Mr. H. E. Raynor.</i>
QUILTON	<i>Mr. J. W. Macdonald.</i>
MILLS	<i>Mr. J. W. Laurence.</i>
FOOTMAN (in Act II) . .	<i>Mr. F. Lake.</i>
SERVANT (in Act III) . .	<i>Mr. Frank Collins.</i>
MRS. FENTON	Aunt to Dorothy Fenton. <i>Miss Florence Haydon.</i>
DOROTHY FENTON	Betrothed to Lord Hassenden. <i>Miss Agnes Miller.</i>
THE LADY URSULA BAR-	
RINGTON	Sister to Lord Hassenden. <i>Miss Evelyn Millard.</i>

All the costumes, wigs, and properties used in the production of "The Adventure of Lady Ursula" have been prepared and may be hired or purchased reasonably from Messrs. C. H. Fox, Ltd., 27, Wellington Street, Strand, London.

THE ADVENTURE OF LADY URSULA

ACT I.

SCENE.—*Oak (gothic) chamber. The EARL OF HASSENDEN'S house at Edgware near London, between 4 and 5 on an autumn afternoon, a window back C, a door L. 3, a fireplace R. 2 E., room is panelled, in the panel L. below door is a full-length mirror.*

(BLIMBOE, MRS. FENTON and DOROTHY discovered. DOROTHY stands by window. MRS. FENTON sits by fireplace. BLIMBOE stands R. C. above work-table holding skein of wool for MRS. FENTON.)

MRS. FENTON. If your leisure is exhausted, sir, I must not beg you to stay ; but I regret that, on your first visit as Rector of the parish, you have not found Lady Ursula at home.

BLIMBOE. I share your regret to the full, ma'am.

MRS. FENTON. Dorothy, shouldn't Ursula be back from her walk soon ?

DOROTHY. (*at window c.*) I—I don't know when she will be back, aunt.

BLIMBOE. I fear I must take my leave. Sir George Sylvester expects me. As you may have heard, I am his guest until my parsonage is ready.

DOROTHY. (*coming down L. C. to tea table, puts tea from caddy into tea-pot, then pours hot water out of kettle*) Sir George is an old friend of yours, isn't he ?

BLIMBOE. Yes, and a good friend. He gave me the living, Miss Fenton !

DOROTHY. He doesn't visit here. We have never seen him, though Lord Hassenden used to meet him in town formerly.

BLIMBOE. You must pardon his rudeness. You know the story ?

DOROTHY. Something about a duel ?

BLIMBOE. Yes, he killed his best friend in a duel !

DOROTHY. (*sits on ottoman c.*) About—about a lady, wasn't it, Mr. Blimboe ?

BLIMBOE. Yes, and I fear she was not worth one good man's life and another's bitter grief.

MRS. FENTON. I'm sure of it !

BLIMBOE. So he has sworn to fight no more, to go no more into the society of women, and to admit no lady to his house.

DOROTHY. Surely, Mr. Blimboe, you don't approve of such barbarous oaths ?

BLIMBOE. The second part only is barbarous—and the first only has my approval.

MRS. FENTON. Yes, but it's true enough that wherever women come, quarrels come.

(DOROTHY rises, goes up to window.)

These duels are fearful things. Pray, Mr. Blimboe, have you read in the *Postboy* of the affair in Dublin? (She takes up a paper from the table) Lord Hassen-den says the town is ringing with it.

DOROTHY. (comes R. behind chair) What was it?

BLIMBOE. Yes, yes—between Colonel Joicey and Mr. McArthur.

MRS. FENTON. Brothers-in-law!

DOROTHY. (attempts to take paper) And they fought? What was the quarrel about?

BLIMBOE. About——

MRS. FENTON. (picks up paper, throws it into fire) It is of no consequence about what. They fought after dinner, across the table.

DOROTHY. What, lunging with their swords among the decanters? Oh, they must have looked absurd! (crosses door R. of MRS. FENTON)

MRS. FENTON. They fought with pistols, child.

BLIMBOE. Pardon me, ma'am, with one pistol, for the other was unloaded. Each combatant drew one at random.

MRS. FENTON. Yes, and Mr. McArthur drew the right one and shot the Colonel through the head. He fell across the table, dead in an instant, and breaking all the glasses.

DOROTHY. How horrible; I think Sir George

Sylvester is quite right not to fight. (*goes up to window again*)

MRS. FENTON. Is Ursula in sight, Dorothy?

DOROTHY. No, I see nothing of her.

MRS. FENTON. (*rises—takes wool from BLIMBOE, puts it on table*) Then we mustn't detain you, Mr. Blimboe. But stay—we shall be at home this evening. Pray come and play a game of Cassino with us, and make yourself known to Ursula.

BLIMBOE. (*crossing to door L. 3 E.*) With the utmost pleasure. I won't fail you. Ladies, your servant. (*he bows*)

(MRS. FENTON and DOROTHY curtsy.)

(BLIMBOE goes off L. 3 E.)

DOROTHY. (*coming down to tea table*) I wish he'd bring Sir George with him.

MRS. FENTON. My dear, if Sir George does not wish to know the ladies of the neighbourhood, nothing can be more undignified than to seek or even to desire acquaintance with him. (*sits again by fireplace*)

DOROTHY. (*at tea-table L., pours tea and brings cup to MRS. FENTON*) But he's such an interesting man, Ursula says.

MRS. FENTON. Interesting indeed! He certainly was a noted duellist, and I'm afraid a sad rake too.

DOROTHY. Do you think all that makes him less interesting, aunt? If I were not going to marry Frank——

MRS. FENTON. Pray don't let Lord Hassenden hear you say such things.

DOROTHY. Of course not, but I may say them when he doesn't hear me, I suppose. Anyhow, Ursula finds him interesting. (*to window again*) She must be back soon, unless—oh! what fun! But I should lose my wager.

MRS. FENTON. What are you talking about, my dear?

(DOROTHY comes down L. of her, laughs, whispers in her ear, then R. of her.)

What? What do you say, Dorothy? Heaven's above us. Gone to Sir George Sylvester's—Ursula gone to——

(DOROTHY laughs and nods.)

Well, what young women are coming to, I don't know!

DOROTHY. (*down at ottoman*) Oh, people always say that. I suppose they always will, and—we never do anything striking after all. Anyhow, it's Ursula, not me. I wonder if the trick can have succeeded?

MRS. FENTON. Pray let me hear no more about it!

DOROTHY. Very well. (*coming down, she sits c. on ottoman, and yawns*)

(MRS. FENTON coughs—DOROTHY yawns, MRS. FENTON coughs again)

Where's Frank, too?

MRS. FENTON. My dear!

DOROTHY. Oh, how dull it is.

MRS. FENTON. (*pause*) What is this disgraceful trick, Dorothy? (*placing cup on table*)

DOROTHY. Well, you told me not to talk about it, but—it's so amusing. (*rises and crosses to MRS. FENTON.*) Oh, but you'll betray it to Frank!

MRS. FENTON. I won't—indeed I won't!

DOROTHY. (*L. of MRS. FENTON and behind her laughing*), I believe you like a joke after all, aunt! Well, Ursula has wagered me that she'll gain admission to Sir George's house.

(*Bus. MRS. FENTON attempts to rise—astonished—*

DOROTHY *pushes her into chair.*)

MRS. FENTON. What? Well? (*sits*)

DOROTHY. (*sitting on stool R.*) Just to make him break his oath, you know. She's gone out walking with Quilton—he's devoted to her and will do anything she tells him—and when she comes to Sir George's gates, she'll turn faint and Quilton will help her up the avenue, and ring the bell, and Ursula will sink down on the doorstep and then—— (*sitting on stool*)

MRS. FENTON. (*severely*) Well—and then?

DOROTHY. (*crosses and sits R. of her on footstool*) Oh, then I've wagered he won't ask her to walk in, and she's wagered he will. Oh, which do you think he'll do, aunt? The wager is six pairs of the finest silk stockings. And I have no money, and I can't ask Frank for them, can I? Not yet, I mean.

MRS. FENTON. And if Ursula does force her way in, in this fashion?

DOROTHY. Oh, if she does make her way in—well, I shouldn't wonder if she went again.

MRS. FENTON. If I had known such escapades were to go on, I'd never have brought you here. I hope, Dorothy, that when you're married—— (*rises and crosses L. then down*)

(DOROTHY *rises and goes up R. to window.*)

—you will exert an influence for good on your sister-in-law.

DOROTHY. (*absently, looking out of window*) Yes, I will, aunt.

MRS. FENTON. (*rises with cup and goes to tea-table*) You have been genteelly and religiously brought up.

DOROTHY. (*as before*) Yes, I have, aunt. (*comes down L. and speaks over MRS. FENTON'S shoulder just as she pours out tea*) Oh, I wonder what's happened? Do you think he'll let her in?

MRS. FENTON. (*putting down cup in surprise on table L.*) My dear, I don't take the least interest in the subject. (*going L.*) But if I had done such a thing when I was a girl—— (*bus. stands before mirror*)

DOROTHY. (*c. laughing*) Sir George wouldn't have let you in, auntie!

MRS. FENTON. (*sees DOROTHY'S reflection in mirror*) I said nothing of the kind, Dorothy. Why are you laughing, pray?

DOROTHY. (*goes up c.*) At the idea, aunt.

(MRS. FENTON *looks severely at her and goes to door L., turns, catches DOROTHY laughing, says "Dorothy!"*)

(*Exit MRS. FENTON L. 3.*)

Never mind, I don't think she'll tell Frank. (*runs to window*) Oh, there's Ursula! (*glances at clock*) She can't have got in—it's too early. Then I've won the wager. Now what colour shall I have my stockings?

(*Enter URSULA L.; she seems out of breath and agitated. Crosses front of DOROTHY and throws herself into chair R. by fire and sits silent. DOROTHY comes down R. c. by her.*)

You've lost, you've lost, Ursula. Now this time, positively, you must pay the stakes. I wagered you six pairs of the finest——

URSULA. (R.) Oh, do be quiet, Dorothy. I'm not thinking of stockings. I'd give sixty pairs to be out of this business. (*jumping up and coming to c.*) A terrible thing has happened, Dorothy.

DOROTHY. A terrible thing? Why, what?

URSULA. (R. c. *impressively*) If Frank is dead by this time to-morrow, it will be my fault. (*sits on ottoman*)

DOROTHY. (*comes down R. c.*) Frank dead—dead by this time to-morrow! Oh, what do you mean? (*kneels R. by URSULA*)

URSULA. I'll tell you all about it. (*pathetically*)
Oh, try—try not to hate me, darling.

DOROTHY. Tell me what you mean about Frank.

URSULA. I am telling you—only you interrupt me.

(DOROTHY *jumps up*.)

I went there—to that odious man's—you know—as—as we arranged and——

DOROTHY. We didn't arrange, it was all your idea.

URSULA. Well, you incited me.

DOROTHY. No, I dissuaded you.

URSULA. (*both up R. C.*) You wagered——

DOROTHY. (*follows her*) That was to dissuade you. Oh, but go on.

URSULA. Oh, you'll be against me! (*R. C. down to fireplace R.*) Of course. I don't care, I couldn't foresee what would happen. It was just the unluckiest——

DOROTHY. (*follows—table between them*) Are you never going on?

URSULA. The very moment you'll be quiet and let me!

DOROTHY. Quiet! How can I be quiet when Frank's in peril of——?

URSULA. Very well.

(*A pause. They look defiantly at one another.*)

DOROTHY. Oh, go on then. (*sits on ottoman C.*)

URSULA. I went there and—and I fainted. (*R. of work-table*) I'd planned everything with Quilton most perfectly. He helped me up the avenue and left me—dropping on a seat. Then he went to the door and gave my compliments, said I was ill, and begged leave to rest myself for a little while before I resumed my walk. The servant shut the door, we waited, he came back with the answer—Sir George Sylvester presented his compliments to Lady Ursula Barrington and——

DOROTHY. Would she honour him by stepping in ?

URSULA. (*crosses to tea table L. c.*) No ! Would she take a glass of wine.

DOROTHY. Well, well, Ursula ?

URSULA. I sent again. My compliments, I was obliged to Sir George, but I needed nothing except a few moments' rest on a sofa. Although, in truth, I was by then ashamed to go in, for my cheeks were as red as Frank's uniform.

DOROTHY. And what answer did he send to that ?

URSULA. Sir George's compliments. He regretted that his establishment did not admit of his receiving ladies, but he begged me to consider the porter's lodge at my disposal, and to rest there so long as I might be inclined. (*sits chair L.*)

DOROTHY. The porter's lodge !

URSULA. The porter's lodge.

DOROTHY. What barbarity ! But you've lost the wager, Ursula !

URSULA. Oh! that for the wager! How am I to tell you, Dorothy? Now comes the dreadful thing?

DOROTHY. (*rises, goes to her*) About Frank?

URSULA. Yes, about Frank. Just at that moment, as the devil would have it—

(*A movement from DOROTHY.*)

Oh, I know, my dear, but it was the devil if ever anything was—just at that moment who should come riding by but Frank? He saw me on the seat in the avenue and Quilton still by the door. “What’s this?” he calls—off his horse in a moment! And that silly old Quilton—I suppose he thought he was helping me—told him that I was ill, and had asked leave to rest, but that Sir George had told me to go to—to the porter’s lodge. You know Frank’s temper—at least you will soon.

DOROTHY. Frank’s the sweetest temper—

(URSULA *rises, crosses up to window* c. DOROTHY *follows to L. c.*)

URSULA. Oh, sweet as gunpowder, my dear, and twice as quick. When he heard those words—porter’s lodge—a Barrington sent to the porter’s lodge—he blazed out in an instant, ordered me off home—on my soul I forgot to go on being faint (*comes down* c.) and sent Quilton with a message that Sir George was no gentleman, that Sir George had insulted his sister, that an insult to his sister was an insult to him, that Sir George used to know, even if

he had ceased to practise, the rules of conduct common among gentlemen, and that—oh, there was plenty more, but the sum of it all was that Sir George should *hear from him*. (*crossing to fireplace R. below table R.*)

DOROTHY. (*crossing to R. C.*) Hear from him?

URSULA. (R.) That he'd send his seconds to him, you know. I left Frank waiting for the answer, but of course Sir George must go out.

DOROTHY. (*crosses to URSULA*) Go out! Fight, you mean—fight?

URSULA. Yes. He doesn't want to fight, you know, because of his last affair; but he must after Frank's words.

DOROTHY. Oh, how terrible! (*clutching her arm*) Ursula, they won't fight as Joicey and McArthur fought?

URSULA. How was that? Oh, you mean the Dublin duel? (*crossing to C.*)

DOROTHY. Yes—the table between them—with one pistol only loaded, each drawing one at random.

URSULA. (*sits on ottoman C.*) No, they won't fight like that. (*shakes her head*)

DOROTHY. (*stands R. by fireplace*) Thank Heaven for so much at least!

URSULA. It'll be worse than that. For Frank, I mean.

DOROTHY. (*rises, crosses to her*) Worse?

URSULA. Yes, that would be an even chance.

As it is, Sir George'll have the choice of weapons, and everybody says he's the finest swordsman in London.

DOROTHY. Oh, you wicked, wicked girl. (*bus. shakes URSULA by shoulders*) It's all your fault, because you were so—so undignified—and—forward and unladylike. Oh, what shall I do? Frank'll be killed. (*crosses to fireplace R., sobs*)

(*URSULA sits looking rigidly in front of her. A pause. Enter QUILTON L. breathless and in haste; he stands looking at them.*)

URSULA. So you may suppose I'm not thinking much about your stockings.

QUILTON. (*comes down door L. c.*) Beg pardon, my lady. Sir George sends word that my lord may send his friends as soon as my lord pleases, and Sir George will be pleased to name his.

DOROTHY. Oh!

URSULA. Where is my brother, Quilton?

QUILTON. On his way here, my lady. He is anxious to see and console your ladyship.

URSULA. Console me!

DOROTHY. Console her!

QUILTON. He'll be here directly. (*going up L. c.*) Beg your ladyship's pardon—shall I say that your ladyship is better?

URSULA. No, Quilton; worse, worse.

QUILTON. Worse, worse!

(*QUILTON goes off L.*)

(URSULA looks at DOROTHY, crosses to L., then crosses R., sighs.)

URSULA. I must tell Frank the truth, that's all. (*pauses*) And he must tell Sir George and apologise for what he said under a misapprehension. Perhaps that will prevent the meeting.

DOROTHY. What will Sir George think of you ?

URSULA. I suppose he'll think me the most ill-bred and impudent girl he ever heard of. (*up R.*)

DOROTHY. Yes, that's exactly what he'll think.

URSULA. I don't care ; I'd do anything sooner than let them fight. (*pause*) You might pity me a little, Dorothy, I'm very unhappy. (*sits R. on L. arm of chair*)

DOROTHY. Pity you ! I'll keep my pity for my poor dear Frank. (*rises, crosses to fireplace*)

URSULA. (*sits R. of table R.*) How perversely things happen ! It was no more than a little jest of mine and——

(*Enter HASSENDEN L. DOROTHY runs over to him, crosses behind URSULA and throws her arms round his neck.*)

DOROTHY. (L. c.) Oh, darling Frank, must you fight this awful man ?

HASSENDEN. (*tenderly*) Yes, dear, I must go out with him. Don't fear for me. I can take care of myself. (*leaves DOROTHY*)

(DOROTHY goes up to window c. sobbing.)

(comes to URSULA, lays his hand on her chair and bends over her) My poor insulted sister!

URSULA. (rises, a step down R.) Don't kiss me!

DOROTHY. Poor insulted sister indeed! (comes down L. C.)

HASSENDEN. (R. C., looking from one to the other) Why—what do you mean?

DOROTHY. Oh, I'll leave Ursula to tell you herself.

HASSENDEN. To tell me what?

DOROTHY. What she has done.

HASSENDEN. (C.) If there is anything to tell, pray tell me quickly. I am on guard to-night and must leave for town immediately. I need not add that I have fresh business on hand now.

URSULA. (by fireplace R.) Frank, there must be no meeting between Sir George Sylvester and you over this matter.

HASSENDEN. (C.) But by Heaven there must. The challenge is given and accepted. Neither can draw back. (goes up L. C., puts down whip and hat on sofa, goes down to DOROTHY L.)

URSULA. There must be no meeting on account of the way in which Sir George used me. What he did was less than my deserts. I was playing a trick on him! (stands front of table R.)

(HASSENDEN turns suddenly, and is about to speak.)

Oh, you need say nothing! You need not tell me what you think of me. I wanted to have a laugh against him. He refused to admit a woman

to his house. I tried to procure entrance by pretending a fit of faintness. Well, I failed, I did not get in, he sent me to the porter's lodge.

HASSENDEN. (*crosses to table*) Is this true, Ursula?

URSULA. (*standing down R.*) Yes, it is all true. I tried and I failed. There the matter would have ended, if you had not chanced to come by. (*crosses DOROTHY L. C.*)

(*DOROTHY goes front of table to C. URSULA front of settee and up C.*)

HASSENDEN. (*goes R.*) As I did chance to come by, there it does not end! It ends and must end elsewhere.

DOROTHY. (*crosses to HASSENDEN R. C.*) But, Frank—you can tell him——

URSULA. You can explain that your words——

HASSENDEN. Sir George Sylvester is too fine a swordsman for his opponent to be very ready with apologies.

DOROTHY. Oh, that's just a man's senseless reason. (*cross to R. of him, crying*)

HASSENDEN. (*takes her hand, detaining her*) Ah, Dorothy, and what is to be my apology? What's my excuse? (*holds DOROTHY'S hand, places her to R. of him and turns to URSULA who is up L.*) That I have a sister—Lady Ursula Barrington—whose habit it is to force her acquaintance on gentlemen

who do not desire it, and her way into their houses when they do not invite her.

(URSULA *stands quite still. A pause.*)

Shall I be welcomed among my brother officers with those excuses on my lips?

DOROTHY. (R. of him) But they will understand—

HASSENDEN. (*front of table R.*) Believe me, if I sheltered myself behind such a plea, it is not one but twenty quarrels that I have on my hands.

DOROTHY. Oh, and it was my fault too, because I——

URSULA. (*comes a step C.*) Stop! It was my fault and mine only. The trick was entirely of my devising.

HASSENDEN. (*turns to URSULA*) A pretty trick indeed! A very pretty trick; it might have cost your reputation, it is likely to cost only my life. (*turns to DOROTHY*) Good-bye, dearest. Hush, not a word; I must go. I will see you again before—before anything further happens. Good-bye. (*kisses her, goes up L. C., pauses, takes up hat and whip, turns and looks at URSULA, goes L.*) You have one more brother. Pray indulge yourself in one more such trick. Good-day to you.

(HASSENDEN *bows and goes off L.*)

(DOROTHY *sits R. and cries.*)

(URSULA *still stands without movement. A pause.*)

URSULA. (C. *up stage*) What's the use of crying?

Tears are no armour for Frank. Tears won't turn Sir George's sword. We can do nothing, so let us laugh—let us laugh! Dolly, isn't it ludicrous in truth? A mad girl plays a trick and a brave gentleman, her dear brother, dies for it. Isn't it laughable? (*walks to window, looks out for a moment*) It's growing dusk!

(DOROTHY *lifts her head and looks at URSULA. A pause.*)

Well, if Frank won't tell the truth, I will tell it to Sir George myself. (*goes down L. in front of mirror*)

DOROTHY. (*leaning forward*) Ursula! You'll write to him!

URSULA. (*looking in mirror*) No, he would not mind a letter. (*taking a step back, smiling a little and striking an attitude*) No, I shall fare better—face to face—I'll go to him!

DOROTHY. (*leaning across table*) Go to him. Oh, and plead with him?

URSULA. Yes! (*she arranges her hair and dances a step or two before the mirror*) And plead with him.

DOROTHY. But—but how are you going to get at him!

(URSULA *wheels round suddenly, goes up c.*)

You can't waylay him in the street, (*goes up c.*) you can't go faint again, and if you did he would—he would only send his compliments and make you welcome to—the porter's lodge!

URSULA. I'll effect an entrance if—if I have to kiss the footman! (*runs to DOROTHY*) Take heart, Dolly, dear Dolly! Your beau shan't be killed, nor my cruel brother either.

(*DOROTHY by fireplace R. C.*)

Oh, if Walter were here and not in France. He could help me.

DOROTHY. (*following her down L. to her*) Walter? What could he do? Except be second to Frank in the duel?

URSULA. Why, he could go to Sir George and tell him what Frank won't tell him.

(*DOROTHY leaves URSULA, goes R., sits.*)

Oh, to be a man for an hour! (*pauses*) Walter could get in! I can't—unless (*glances at window, it is growing dusk*) Unless in the dark, I were mistaken for a man.

DOROTHY. What's the use of talking in that fashion? Mistake you for a man! (*sits R.*)

URSULA. (*going up to window*) It's growing dark! (*turns and looks at DOROTHY R.*) I'm a good height, I can bear myself upright. I'm like Walter. (*feels chin*) Walter's chin is still smooth enough. (*comes quickly to DOROTHY R. over her shoulder*) I'm going to help Frank. Will you help him—help him by helping me?

(*DOROTHY dissents.*)

Oh, I know what may be said if I am found out.

What do I care if I can prevent this duel? Dolly, will you help me?

DOROTHY. How? In what—only tell me. (*sitting*)

URSULA. By keeping my secret, and by being on the look out—to let me in when I come. (*goes up c.*)

DOROTHY. Let you in? Are you going out (*moves to c., rising*) to Sir George's again, Ursula?

URSULA. (*turns to her*) Yes, to Sir George's again. Will you do what I ask of you—will you, Dolly? (*catches her hands*)

DOROTHY. (*drawing back*) I'll do anything to help Frank.

URSULA. (*reproachfully*) And nothing to help me now? (*takes her hands smiling*) But I'll win your love again.

(DOROTHY *pulls her right hand away.*)

(*still holding on to DOROTHY's left hand, chases her to c.*) And to punish you, I'll win the stockings after all. No, you shall kiss me. (*kisses DOROTHY who is reluctant, but at last kisses her, laughing a little, runs L. calling*) Quilton! Quilton! (*going up to door L., then down to mirror L.*)

(*She stands before mirror, assumes a jaunty attitude and draws her skirt above and away from her foot. Drops her skirt hastily, turns away and comes down c. as QUILTON enters carrying a large box. He sets it down up L. c. as URSULA speaks to him.*)

Has my lord gone to town yet?

(DOROTHY rises, crosses to fireplace.)

QUILTON. (L. c., coming down) He has just set out, my lady. He hopes to be back in the early morning.

URSULA. (going to him L. c.) Dear old Quilton, I'm in great trouble.

QUILTON. There's nothing new in that. (*laughs*)

URSULA. And it is by my own fault.

QUILTON. (C.) Nor is that neither. But you'll coax your way out of it, and there'll be nothing new in that neither. (*laughs*)

URSULA. (L. puts hand affectionately on his shoulder) Shall I, Quilton? Not unless you help me.

QUILTON. Ah, and there'll be nothing new in that neither. I remember well enough when you were a naughty little girl—— (*laughs*)

URSULA. For Heaven's sake, don't remember that. Indeed you remember it too often.

(QUILTON *laughs*.)

Tell me what suits of Mr. Walter's have you here?

(DOROTHY looks up startled and listens.)

Most of them, I know, he took with him to France.

QUILTON. Why, my lady, for what reason do you desire to know?

URSULA. Oh, never mind why. Tell me, tell me. Dolly, come here and listen.

DOROTHY. (*coming to c. R. of QUILTON who is between them*). But why in the world are you——?

URSULA. If either of you love me, no more questions. The suits, Quilton! Dear Quilton, the suits!

QUILTON. (*laughs*) Well, God knows the ways of your mind, my lady. Well then, there is the black slashed with red.

URSULA. (*crosses to L.*) Oh, I'm not going to play the devil in Dr. Faustus.

QUILTON. There's the white and gold.

URSULA. Alas, I am not going to a wedding.

QUILTON. There's a buff and violet.

URSULA. I should be like a Whig in mourning!

(DOROTHY *stands c.*)

QUILTON. There's the sage-green.

URSULA. I am not wise—and I have no man yet to be jealous of.

DOROTHY. But, Ursula—— (*going to URSULA*)

URSULA. (*lets go QUILTON'S arm*) Hush, you'll understand directly, and I have your promise of secrecy.

QUILTON. There's the pink.

URSULA. (*to the mirror, pushes him L., looks over his shoulder into mirror*) Oh, it kills my face! Are there no more?

QUILTON. No more, my lady.

URSULA. That ever my plan should be baulked like this ! For I had better not go at all than go in a colour that doesn't become me. (*sits on ottoman c.*)

DOROTHY. Oh, I understand. (*clasping her hands*) Ursula, how shall you—— ? (*falls back a little*)

URSULA. (c.) (*on ottoman*) Is there absolutely no other, Quilton ?

QUILTON. (L.) None, my lady, except—— (*goes up L. c. to box of clothes*)

DOROTHY. (*looks at box*) What's this ? (*runs to it, kneels R. of box, reads address on it*) To the Honourable Walter Barrington at Edgware. (*looks at URSULA and reads again*) The suit as commanded in blue and white.

URSULA. Blue and white ?

QUILTON. It's Mr. Walter's new suit, my lady—ordered for the Ambassador's Ball in France. I brought the box here that your ladyship might write the French address on it for me.

URSULA. Blue and white ! (*crosses up to c., meets DOROTHY who is L. of her*) Oh, Dolly, the colours become me to a marvel, what a blessed chance ! (*crosses to mirror L. looking at herself*)

QUILTON. (L. c.) It must go to Paris at once, my lady.

URSULA. (*up to door L.*) It must go first to Sir George Sylvester's.

QUILTON. To Sir George Sylvester's—and who to go in it then ?

URSULA. (*up at door L.*) Why, I am, Quilton.
(*comes down C.*)

(QUILTON *chuckles*. DOROTHY *places her hand over his mouth.*)

Oh, laugh away, but I'll do it. Give me the box, Dolly.

(DOLLY and QUILTON *lift the box and carry down to ottoman C.*)

And, Quilton, you must dress my hair. (*pats QUILTON on shoulder*)

(URSULA *goes to ottoman C., uncovers box.*)

QUILTON. God save us, and what'll my lord say?
(*chuckling*)

DOROTHY. (*R. of ottoman*) My lord mustn't know.
(*then down L. of table L.*)

QUILTON. And what'll Mr. Walter say? She's going to wear the breeches!

(*Exit QUILTON.*)

URSULA. (*crosses to above ottoman C.*) Dolly, Dolly, see here's the coat—a beautiful coat! (*crosses to L., then back to R.*)

(DOROTHY *runs to her*—URSULA *hands coat to DOROTHY who slips coat over URSULA'S shoulder*. URSULA *runs to mirror L.* DOROTHY *takes out waistcoat.*)
(*coming C.*) And what a waistcoat!

DOROTHY. (*L. C.*) Yes—and—— (*takes out the breeches, unfolds them and holds them up*) Look at the——

URSULA. Oh, the——! (*crosses quickly to DOROTHY C., takes breeches*)

(DOROTHY takes coat from her shoulders, URSULA runs across to DOROTHY, both examine the breeches laughing. URSULA holds them in front of her gown as though measuring them. DOROTHY laughs and claps her hands. While they are thus engaged, MRS. FENTON enters L. and stands a moment looking.)

MRS. F. (L. at door) What are you doing? (*comes down L.*) What have you there? (L. C.)

URSULA. (*hides breeches, DOROTHY hides coat,* Only — only Walter's new clothes, Mrs. Fenton.

DOROTHY. (R. C.) Yes—only—only Walter's new clothes, aunt.

URSULA. (C.) They've just come home, they're for the Ambassador's Ball at Paris.

DOROTHY. (R. C.) They have to go to Paris at once. Aren't they pretty?

URSULA. We were just looking at them—and—and—seeing whether they—I mean hoping they would fit, you know. (*drops breeches on floor C.*)

MRS. FENTON. (*down to C.*) Hum, a nice employment for you, young ladies. Pray, do ladies usually scrutinize gentlemen's clothes, to see whether they fit?

URSULA. Only—only when the gentleman's inside them, as a rule, I suppose. (*nudges DOROTHY mischievously*)

MRS. FENTON. It was not the custom in my girlhood. (*crosses to mirror, then back to L. C.*)

DOROTHY. (*down R.*) No, I suppose not, aunt.

MRS. FENTON. Come, dears, fold them neatly, and put them away. As for you, Ursula, I have heard of your proceedings. You should be ashamed of yourself.

(DOROTHY *drops coat on floor.*)

URSULA. (*backs up R. C.*) Indeed I am. Fold up the coat, Dorothy.

(DOROTHY *kneels down R. and is folding coat.*)

Oh yes, I am, Mrs. Fenton. (*picks up breeches from floor*) I'll fold these.

MRS. FENTON. (*L. front of tea-table*) And now you're looking at a gentleman's clothes. Well, I suppose you'll be trying them on next. (*crosses L. down*)

(DOROTHY *laughs, and URSULA hits her with the breeches and smothered laugh in coat.* MRS. FENTON *at mirror.*)

URSULA. (*R. C. above door*) Trying them on! Oh fie, Mrs. Fenton! Do be quick and put them back in the box, Dorothy!

(MRS. FENTON *goes up L. C.* URSULA *again makes as though to measure the breeches,* MRS. FENTON *turns round, and URSULA begins to fold them hastily.* DOROTHY *folding coat on floor R.*)

Oh, Dorothy, don't crease the coat, or I shall—I—I—

mean—or Walter will look—— (*still holds the breeches*)

MRS. FENTON. (*up c. to door L.*) Come with me, Dorothy. I want you to write a letter for me. (*goes L.*)

DOROTHY. (*crosses to box c., places coat in box*) I'll come in an instant, aunt.

MRS. FENTON. And do endeavour to conduct yourselves with more gentility.

(*Exit MRS. FENTON L. 1 E.*)

URSULA. (*drops breeches into box, crossing up, looking after MRS. FENTON*) Oh, I'll conduct myself with infinite gentility. (*crosses back to c.*) Dolly, I'll be the finest gallant in the town. You shan't see me for fear you forsake poor Frank and fall in love with me all in a moment.

DOROTHY. (*amazed, backing down R.*) You'll wear them? You'll go in them to Sir George?

URSULA. I will.

DOROTHY. And, Ursula, can you—ah, can you prevent a duel?

URSULA. (*coming to her R.*) No, Dolly.

DOROTHY. And Frank will be killed——

URSULA. (*going back to c. above box*) No, Frank will not be killed.

(*DOROTHY follows her to R. C. and falls crying R. of ottoman.*)

(c. *holding breeches by one leg*) There must be a duel,
but—

I will fight it with Sir George !

QUICK CURTAIN.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE.—SIR GEORGE SYLVESTER'S house at Edgware.

Eight p.m. The dining-room. Door up L. down R. At back L. C. large window in a recess with curtains drawn across. Centre L. a large square table with decanters and glasses. Long pipes. Tobacco, snuff, candlesticks, hand-bell, lighted candles.

(*Discovered. BLIMBOE and CASTLETON R. at table. CASTLETON'S hat, cloak and sword on chair R. C.*)

CASTLETON. (*sitting R. of table*) Plague take it, George is too good a fellow to play the hermit in this ridiculous fashion.

BLIMBOE. (*up by fireplace L.*) He has three things to mourn, sir. His own sin——

CASTLETON. (*coming down L.*) Good gad, sir, he was the aggrieved party——

BLIMBOE. But he was obstinate in the quarrel—his own sin, I say, a friend's death, and a woman's falseness.

CASTLETON. Give 'em a month each, and they're well paid. But two years! It was a fair fight—his life against another's—and now to live in a hole,

to refuse to cross swords with a man, or glances with a woman—to——

BLIMBOE. It argues great constancy of character.

CASTLETON. The devil take such constancy. I think, sir, you hardly allow for what is incumbent in a gentleman.

BLIMBOE. Ah, you're quoting the last words McArthur spoke before he killed his sister's husband !

CASTLETON. There I'm with you. To fight across a table with one pistol only loaded—that's murder if you like.

BLIMBOE. No more than any duel when a man falls—

(Enter SYLVESTER R. 2 E.)

No ! No ! *(comes down to table)* To fight in a private quarrel is a sin, to break an oath is a sin, and——

(SYLVESTER comes up C. stage.)

CASTLETON. On my soul, to refuse to see a pretty girl—whether in or out of a faint, I care not—is a heinous sin. *(sees SYLVESTER)* Ah, George, you've heard us.

SYLVESTER. Yes, I've heard you, and I'm damned three times over. For I would not see her and I will not. Fight I will, and to fight I must break my oath. *(crosses to above table L. C.)*

(BLIMBOE sits L. of table.)

CASTLETON. The oath had no sense, George ; no

consistency, no harmony of its members. For to keep the part concerning women was bound to run you into a discourtesy.

BLIMBOE. True, Mr. Castleton ; very well put, sir.

CASTLETON. And from discourtesy follows fighting, as pat as one kiss from another.

BLIMBOE. Yet the Scriptures tell us——

CASTLETON. Ah, we live in other times, and a man cannot be at odds with his times.

BLIMBOE. The case is difficult, I own.

SYLVESTER. (*standing above table L. c. laughing*) For a parson who loves fighting, mighty difficult. (*claps BLIMBOE on the shoulder*) This fellow's a glutton for it in his heart. But for his cloth we should none of us be safe. (*fills pipe, sighing*) But I regret this affair. Hassenden's a good fellow, though he's over hot in the head—and plague take it, when I see my man opposite me I am bound to use my knowledge. (*lunges with pipe*)

BLIMBOE. You need do no more than touch him—the wrist say, or somewhere safe in the shoulder. This is not a Joicey and McArthur business.

CASTLETON. No—no more of that butchery in Heaven's name !

SYLVESTER. He offered me most direct insults, and I love a neat thrust, Jack. (*sits at head of table*)

CASTLETON. That you did always. But—does the oath hold good except for Hassenden ?

SYLVESTER. For you anyhow, say what you will. (*shakes hands*)

CASTLETON. Then give me leave to tell you you're a fool. Ah, make as many vows to women as you like, but none about them !

BLIMBOE. Now pray, sir, why so ?

CASTLETON. Because the keeping of the first depends on your own mind, and the keeping of the second depends mainly on theirs.

(All laugh.)

(to SYLVESTER) Besides, George, I hear that the lady whom you would have sent to your porter's lodge is to be the belle of London—the prettiest creature, they say, in all the town. She passed a season in York, and broke more hearts than they break heads at a Westminster election.

BLIMBOE. The more reason to restrict her to the porter's lodge.

CASTLETON. I grant you that—from the porter's point of view.

SYLVESTER. And from mine also.

CASTLETON. Ugliness may produce a virtue ; a soldier with no legs can't run away !

(BLIMBOE and SYLVESTER laugh.)

But hang me, George, if it be one—or if it be, the world is nine-tenths virtuous already.

BLIMBOE. There is no virtue, sir, where there is no temptation.

CASTLETON. And where there is temptation there remains very little virtue.

(CASTLETON *laughs*. SYLVESTER *laughs*.)

If a man desires to be righteous—why, the world is badly ordered for him——

(BLIMBOE *protests*.)

But I wish you'd seen her, George.

BLIMBOE. Surely you will not kill the young lord, Sir George? He's to be married in a month to a most engaging young lady.

SYLVESTER. Hum! Then I come in the nick of time to save him. Death is to marriage as the *coup de grace* to slow torture.

(BLIMBOE *protests*.)

CASTLETON. But they say fanatics feel no pain.

SYLVESTER. (*filling glasses*) Then I amend—better death than madness.

(BLIMBOE *protests*. *They drink*.)

BLIMBOE. The Holy Martyrs were not mad.

SYLVESTER. They were leaving their wives behind them——

(BLIMBOE *protests*.)

and going to a place where in most cases they wouldn't meet them again. (*laughs*)

BLIMBOE. (*rising*) Gentlemen, gentlemen! Marriage is of divine foundation.

SYLVESTER. Maybe, but when a building is complete the foundations are not visible. (*laughs*)

(*Points pipe playfully at BLIMBOE*. SYLVESTER and BLIMBOE *toast each other, touching glasses*.)

CASTLETON. (*stands above his chair c.*) She's tall, they say, and slender. George, I like 'em like willows. Her eye is blue. Her cheek not so red, but that you have good excuse for making it redder, her mouth not so small as to stint a man, not yet so large as to discourage him from seeking to cover it. Her ear——

SYLVESTER. In heaven's name who's the text for this rhapsody?

CASTLETON. It's only a part of what is reported of the lady whom you sent to your porter's lodge. I trust you asked leave of the porter's wife.

SYLVESTER. The porter, thank heaven, is a bachelor.

CASTLETON. George, I think I'll be your porter.

(*All laugh.*)

Give this fellow his *congé* and take me in his place. (*comes R. c.*) Well, fight you will and kiss you won't! So it stands, does it?

SYLVESTER. Yes, I must be content to keep half my oath. (*taps bell*) At least it is the better half.

CASTLETON. Well, since I can't help you in one (*takes his sword from chair R. c. and puts it on*) I'd help you in the other, but Hassenden's of my company and my friend.

SYLVESTER. (*rises*) I know, Jack. I'll ask Giles March to act for me.

BLIMBOE. (*rising*) But can there be no explanation, no apology?

(SYLVESTER *puts hand on BLIMBOE's shoulder, places him back in chair.*)

SYLVESTER. None—the affair has gone too far.

CASTLETON. Swords, I suppose?

SYLVESTER. Without doubt. I was the challenged party.

CASTLETON. Well, Heaven bring you both safe out of it. Good-night, George.

SYLVESTER. Good-night. I'll find you at your lodgings to-morrow, we don't meet till the next day. (*follows CASTLETON c., shakes hands*) Because Has-senden is on guard to-night.

(*Enter MILLS R. 2 E. Gets CASTLETON's cloak off chair R.*)

And his eye might be out.

CASTLETON. Then you've full leisure for the arrangements. But come up to-night, George. What is there to detain you here?

SYLVESTER. (*leaning against table*) Nothing. Yet I'll stay. I'm not dressed, and I'm not in the mood for company.

CASTLETON. (R. C. MILLS *assists him with cloak*) As you like. But if you change your mind, there's a bed at my lodgings, and I'll leave word where I am if I go out. (*going L. to exit*) Good-night to you, Mr. Blimboe.

BLIMBOE. (*rising and bowing*) Sir, your obedient servant.

CASTLETON. (L. *at door, pausing*) I wish you'd let her in, George. On my life I long to see her!

SYLVESTER. (c.) Ah, I don't—Till to-morrow then !

CASTLETON. I still hope for to-night.

(*He goes off* L. 2 E., MILLS *follows* CASTLETON *off*.)

(SYLVESTER *pours out glass of wine*.)

BLIMBOE. (*above table* L. c.) I also wish that you had seen her, if she be all Mr. Castleton says.

SYLVESTER. (*sits* R. *of table*) You wish it ?

BLIMBOE. Yes, whether for sin or for sorrow, you have grieved long enough. (*comes down to* SYLVESTER)

SYLVESTER. (*giving him his* L. *hand*) You're a good friend. But I can't bring myself to think of a woman.

BLIMBOE. You'd have said the same of a sword last night.

SYLVESTER. Aye, I'm a fool, if that helps the matter.

BLIMBOE. (*at head of table*) Well, it will be of little use if you kill her brother ; still when we meet again, I'll tell you what she is in truth like.

SYLVESTER. You'll tell me ? Shall you see her then ?

BLIMBOE. She is of my parish, thanks to you. And it is my duty to see her. I waited on her this afternoon, but saw only the lady who is to marry my lord, and her aunt. Lady Ursula was out.

SYLVESTER. Oh, yes, Lady Ursula was out. I know that well enough.

BLIMBOE. So I go to-night to play a game of Cassino and make acquaintance with her.

SYLVESTER. Not a word of this matter, in case Hassenden has not mentioned it.

BLIMBOE. You may trust me in that.

SYLVESTER. But I hoped you would bear me company through the evening. What shall I do to pass my time? Must I sit and think of this wonderful lady?

BLIMBOE. Or of the duel you are to fight?

SYLVESTER. (*rises, puts pipe on table*) Plague take it, no! (*goes R. C.*) I'll go to town and find Jack. That'll be better than my thoughts. Good-night, old friend.

(*They shake hands above table.*)

I wish most heartily this had not happened.

(*BLIMBOE about to speak.*)

No, it's too late.

BLIMBOE. But, Sir George—good-night.

(*BLIMBOE goes off L. 1 E.*)

(*SYLVESTER following him to door, then sits moodily L. of table. A pause.*)

SYLVESTER. Eyes blue—her cheek not so red—what was that nonsense of Jack Castleton's? Well, I hope the boy can use his blade a little; on my life I believe I shouldn't care if he used it better than I use mine. (*sighs and yawns*)

(Enter MILLS L. 2 E.)

MILLS. (*coming down L.*) The gardener you wished to see is in waiting, Sir George.

SYLVESTER. Let him come in, then.

MILLS. He's been at work in the garden and his feet—— (*looks at carpet*)

SYLVESTER. (*laughing*) Oh, you're careful for the carpets! (*rises*) Well, I'll see him in the kitchen. (*goes R. and pauses*) I may go to town to-night. Be prepared and set out the black suit. And let the chaise be ready and a horse stood in his harness.

MILLS. Yes, Sir George.

(Exit MILLS L.)

(SYLVESTER goes off. A short pause.)

(Re-enter MILLS L., ushering in URSULA. She wears the white and blue suit, a large hat, and a long cloak folded round her. She looks round hastily and on seeing nobody sighs as though in relief and comes down L. timidly.)

MILLS. (*stands by door, allowing URSULA to pass*) I will inform Sir George of your presence, sir. (*crosses above table to R. C.*) What name, sir?

URSULA. (*below table L.*) Mr. Walter Barrington.

(MILLS goes towards R.)

You may add that I come on Lord Hassenden's business.

MILLS. (R. C.) Yes, sir. Will you be seated?

(moves chair a little from R. to C. or indicates chair)

May I remove your cloak, sir? *(a step towards her)*

URSULA. *(starting)* Remove my cloak? No—no, it's—I'm cold. Pray go at once.

(MILLS goes off R. 2 E.)

(URSULA stands still till he's gone, and then draws a breath.)

Well, here I am, in the house. *(crosses front of table up R., then dances across behind table to L.)* In very truth in the house! And, but for Frank's sake, I'd most heartily wish myself anywhere else in the world—even where I ought to be, at home with the parson—that must have been he whom I passed on the road *(smiling, coming down L. of table)* But I'm in. I've won the stockings from Dorothy. Oh, don't let me think of *(opens cloak)* stockings, or I'm lost—here comes somebody. *(down L.)*

(Hastily folds cloak again as SYLVESTER enters R.)

(Both bow low.)

SYLVESTER. *(comes L. C.)* I am Sir George Sylvester, sir, at your service.

URSULA. *(L. below table)* I—I come, sir—

SYLVESTER. On behalf of Lord Hassenden, if I understand your message rightly? Indeed, sir, I regret that you have been put to this trouble, but—ah—I live so much alone that I forget all courtesies. Pray be seated, sir.

URSULA. (L.) I thank you, sir. (*moves towards chair R. of table.*)

SYLVESTER. (*crosses towards her*) And allow me to assist you to remove your clock.

URSULA. (*crosses to R.*) No, no. I am not warm. Indeed, I am——

SYLVESTER. I insist, indeed I must insist. (*goes to her and takes off cloak, crosses to L. C., flinging it on a chair above table*) Now pray be seated, and let me offer you a glass of wine.

URSULA. (*sits R. nervously tucking her legs under chair*) I thank you again, but no wine, sir.

SYLVESTER. (*coming to R. of table*) I was about to express my regret that you had put yourself to the pains of this visit. I understood that the——er——affair was to be carried through in town——such things make so much less talk in town——and that the arrangements would (*sits R. of table*) be made there. My friend, Mr. March, who acts for me is there already. If it is not inconvenient to you, Mr. Barrington——by the way you are Lord Hassenden's brother, I presume? (*crosses his leg*)

URSULA. (*imitating SYLVESTER, crosses her leg*) Yes, his younger brother.

SYLVESTER. So I suppose, sir; from your style, no less (*looking at her*) than your appearance. I heard you were in France. (*uncrosses legs*)

URSULA. (*imitating him*) I have returned only this evening, and I go back there immediately.

SYLVESTER. Permit me to say, if I do not commit

a breach of etiquette, how deeply I regret that such business as this should await you on your arrival. However, such discussion as is necessary—none I fear can be fruitful—you will prefer to conduct with my friend.

URSULA. No, I—I want to talk to you.

SYLVESTER. Forgive me, but had we not best be regular? Mr. March acts on my behalf, you act on your brother's. (*crosses his other leg*)

URSULA. (*imitates him*) No, sir. You are mistaken. I act on my own behalf. (*crosses legs*)

SYLVESTER. I beg your pardon? I don't catch your meaning. I have, alas, much experience, and in that your age does not enable you to rival me. Your visit, sir, is not regular, if you act for your brother. If you come on business of your own, your visit, however great (*uncrosses leg*)

(URSULA *imitates*.)

an honour to me, is ill-timed. (*rises, crosses to door L.*)
Is your chaise in waiting?

URSULA. (*rising*) Sir George!

SYLVESTER. (*turns to her*) Sir!

URSULA. (R. C.) Is what they tell of you true?
(*to him*)

SYLVESTER. What they tell of a man is seldom true—except when it's evil.

URSULA. That when you met the friend whom you killed——

SYLVESTER. It was by the unluckiest chance.

URSULA. (*R. c. stopping him*) He had sent to you a gentleman, known to you both, charged to effect a reconciliation—and that you would not speak with the gentleman.

SYLVESTER. (*L. of table L.*) Yes, it is true. (*drops into chair*)

(*A pause.*)

URSULA. My chaise is waiting, sir. Shall I go to it?

SYLVESTER. (*coldly*) Sit down and state your business—briefly, if I may beg that favour. If your brother can use his sword as well as you can your tongue, he needs no intercession.

URSULA. (*impulsively*) Ah, forgive me, I (*taking a step to C.*) (*recollecting herself*)—I should say that I am not here to intercede for my brother.

(*SYLVESTER looks up.*)

(*sits R. of table*) Yet I am here to intercede.

SYLVESTER. My quarrel is with your brother—with nobody else.

URSULA. I think, sir, you don't know—my sister?

SYLVESTER. (*still sitting*) As you must be aware. I have no acquaintance with Lady Ursula Barrington.

URSULA. And you desire none?

SYLVESTER. I must plead guilty to your charge. The present situation proves it against me.

URSULA. (*with asperity*) Oh, no need for an apology. I assure you she is fully as unwilling to meet you.

SYLVESTER. I believe it absolutely. Illness drove her to my inhospitable door. And now she takes her brother's part? Or is it her own grievance? I may say to you, sir, what your brother's hasty violence forbade and must forbid me to say to him. (*turns quickly, rises, goes up L., looks at URSULA then crosses down R.*) My refusal to admit your sister was not personal to her, the same message would have come to any lady. My desires are well known. Why am I not free to indulge them? You will say your sister was faint? (*shrugging his shoulders*) Well, I offered——

URSULA. No, sir, I shall say no such thing. My sister was not faint.

SYLVESTER. (*R. starting and looking at her*) Not faint?

URSULA. How can I tell you?

SYLVESTER. (*R. C.*) What can you have to tell me?

URSULA. (*hat in hand*) It grieves me as deeply to speak to her discredit as to my own.

SYLVESTER. I understand your feelings, sir.

URSULA. Do you indeed? Well, here it is. You and my brother are common victims of one—of one—Do you know anything of women?

SYLVESTER. (*smiling*) I have passed my years like a fool—or a monk—if I don't know more than you.

URSULA. Have you read the story of Bluebeard?

SYLVESTER. A wise man, but given to repeating hopeless experiments.

URSULA. Yet you imitated him. You set up his secret room anew.

SYLVESTER. (*L. c. down stage*) I did not give the key to any lady.

URSULA. (*rises, crosses to R. c.*) No, you improved on the model; you dared any lady to find the key.

SYLVESTER. (*turns on her*) Your sister tried?

URSULA. (*turns away C. abashed*) Yes, I am here to confess it for her.

SYLVESTER. Her faintness?

URSULA. A trick to gain admission.

SYLVESTER. (*smiling, crosses to L. c. front of table*) It seems, then, that she did desire my acquaintance.

URSULA. (*takes stage R.*) Oh, a whim—the merest whim. And, indeed, I wonder at it as much as you do!

(*A pause. SYLVESTER looks at her intensely.*)

SYLVESTER. (*goes up L. of table by chair*) Well, she tried—but failed—so she need not lose her head.

URSULA. No, she need only break her heart.

SYLVESTER. For not seeing me? I protest that my attractions don't warrant. (*takes snuff*)

URSULA. (*C.*) No—for causing her brother's death. Your skill, sir, is well known.

SYLVESTER. Skill is a bad possession if it requires a man to sit down under insults. (*sits L. of table*)

URSULA. (*C.*) Yes, but your true quarrel is with my sister. Come, had she been in very truth faint,

was not your message discourteous, and my brother's anger just? (*crosses to R. of chair R., backs from him to chair R.*)

SYLVESTER. You plead well, but then you confess that she was not faint.

URSULA. Aye, but my brother believed her to be. Your quarrel, I say, is with her.

SYLVESTER. Hum—so far as she made a fool of him as well as of me.

URSULA. (*R. of chair R.*) Of you? No, she—she did not come near enough. Well—if you fight with ladies, you have a good quarrel; but must you kill her brother to punish her?

SYLVESTER. Lord Hassenden has not pleaded his sister's trick as excuse.

URSULA. (*C.*) I so plead it now.

SYLVESTER. By whose desire—by his?

URSULA. Lord save us, no—by mine—by hers.

SYLVESTER. (*with impatient laugh*) Well, we've both been fooled—he and I—and my lady laughs at us!

URSULA. Laughs—no, she weeps (*turns, a step R.*) or would weep if she were alone.

SYLVESTER. Ah, my good friend Blimboe's with her.

URSULA. I know some one is with her.

SYLVESTER. And wearies her?

URSULA. Oh, not more than she's able to endure.

SYLVESTER. He promised to bring me an account of her—though in truth I didn't ask it.

URSULA. (R. C.) By some she is thought—good-looking.

SYLVESTER. Is she not ? You look often on her face.

URSULA. (R. C.) I see it less than most of her intimates.

SYLVESTER. (*rises, down to L.*) She might well be handsome. Yes, your sister might well be beautiful—as, indeed, I hear she is—for you, sir, have a handsome face, a good shape and (*looking down*) a pretty leg !

URSULA. (*drawing back her leg hastily, turns, confused, crosses up behind chair R. C.*) You wouldn't surely reason from mine to my sister's ?

SYLVESTER. (*leaning on table L. facing audience*) According to the Philosophers, where observation is impossible, we must use inference.

URSULA. Sir, I protest. (*comes front of chair*)

SYLVESTER. (*laughing, crosses to R. C.*) On my life, you're blushing !

URSULA. (*fans herself with hat*) I'm not blushing ; the—the room is warm.

SYLVESTER. Yet you would have kept your cloak.

URSULA. I—I should have been no hotter in it. Come, we are talking of my sister, not of my leg.

SYLVESTER. (*L. of chair R. standing above her, leaning on chair*) Well, have you by chance a likeness of her ? I should be very willing to see the favour of my petitioner's face.

URSULA. Oh yes, I have a very speaking likeness of her.

SYLVESTER. Pray give it me. (*right to her*)

URSULA. (*moves away down to stage R.*) Give it you? It's early days indeed for that. And would you keep it?

SYLVESTER. (*laughing*) Against all comers, if once I had it for my own. But I meant only—show it me. (*comes down a little*)

URSULA. (*crosses to L. C. facing audience*) By ill luck I have left it behind. It's in—in my wardrobe with some other trifles that I sometimes wear.

SYLVESTER. Love tokens? You're young, sir, to wear such trifles.

URSULA. I might call you young to have forsworn them. (*leans on end of table*) But I'll describe her to you—as I saw her last, standing before her mirror.

(SYLVESTER *sits R. C.*)

SYLVESTER. Is she often in that position.

URSULA. So I see her most often.

SYLVESTER. She has vanity in her then?

URSULA. You shall hear her excuse. Her eyes are——

SYLVESTER. I know—blue.

URSULA. (*looks at SYLVESTER*) Hum, you know? Her colour——

SYLVESTER. Oh, moderate. Neither high nor yet pallid. Well enough, I daresay.

URSULA. (*hat in hand*) Her mouth——

SYLVESTER. Of middle size, neither so small as to be insignificant, nor so large as to be outrageous.

URSULA. (*pouting*) Your informant, sir, is accurate in his information, if cold in his description. Pray who is he ?

SYLVESTER. No matter. (*rises from chair R.*) The information is his ; the coldness, I fear, mine. He raved as far as beyond reason, as (*smiling*) doubtless your sister is beyond comparison.

URSULA. Of that I cannot tell. (*replaces hat on table*) I love her too well to speak of her impartially. (*goes round table up to fireplace L.*)

SYLVESTER. (*crosses to L. C. by chair R. of table*) Is she so virtuous ?

URSULA. (*up by fireplace*) Such duties as she cannot avoid she does.

SYLVESTER. (*picks up pipe from table*) So gentle ?

URSULA. A temper like a summer breeze, rising and falling.

SYLVESTER. (*sits R. of table, lights pipe*) Hum. So patient ?

URSULA. (*crosses to above table L., leans on back of chair*) Of every man except a fool, and of him when no other's by.

SYLVESTER. (*R. of table*) So decorous ?

URSULA. You would have known that if you had not turned her from your door.

SYLVESTER. So loving ?

URSULA. Loving ? Oh, as far as that, I can't tell. (*sits on chair*)

SYLVESTER. But you're her brother.

URSULA. True, true, she loves me well, very well. Of other love she knows nothing yet.

SYLVESTER. She will soon, no doubt.

URSULA. (*eagerly*) Do you think she will? (*looks intently in his face, then sits at head of table*)

SYLVESTER. If she's so handsome, and as little coy as would seem to be the case——

URSULA. As little coy as! In faith, she's monstrously coy.

SYLVESTER. Yes, sometimes she faints for very coyness, eh? (*holds up wine-glass*) Come, you must cure her. Such coyness does not fit a woman of fashion. On my soul, they would take care to faint, not outside your door, but well within it!

(URSULA, *rising, crossing to R. C.*)

URSULA. Ah, I see that you won't forgive her.

SYLVESTER. Yes, I will.

URSULA. You will—ah, thank Heaven.

SYLVESTER. (*leans on table facing her*) On a condition.

URSULA. Not that Frank—that Hassenden must make you an apology? I fear he——

SYLVESTER. (*pipe in hand*) No. On condition that—you give me the likeness which is in your wardrobe.

URSULA. You ask before seeing it? And shouldn't you ask it of Ursula herself?

SYLVESTER. If I like it when I see it, I will ask it of her.

URSULA. (*by chair R. C.*) A bargain—a bargain! But I don't know whether she will give it you.

SYLVESTER. (*moves to front of table, picks up her hat*) She fainted only for a sight of me.

URSULA. (*crosses around chair R. C., leans on back of chair*) She might faint less after a sight of you. Seeing is believing, but dreaming oft is—

SYLVESTER. (*leaning on table facing audience*) Loving, aye—and loving dreaming! But I shall like her well if she has your merry wit, and—shall I say—twice your looks. (*puts hat and pipe down on table.*)

URSULA. Twice my looks! Well, perhaps some day you shall see the portrait. So she is forgiven? (*to C. holding out her hand*)

SYLVESTER. (*coming C. holding out his hand*) Most heartily!

URSULA. (*C. taking his hand*) And her brother for her sake?

SYLVESTER. Oh, the lesser sinner with the greater! (*they shake hands*)

(*He looks at her hand intently, she snatches her hand away and arranges cravat.*)

URSULA. And am I forgiven?

SYLVESTER. (*up L. C.*) Why, where's your offence?

URSULA. In wearying you so long.

SYLVESTER. (*crosses towards her*) You are forgiven for your wit and—well, for that pretty leg of yours.

(URSULA *annoyed*.)

Blushing again! Pray imitate that sort of coyness which is your sister's.

URSULA. I'm nearer to it than you think, and than my appearance proves.

SYLVESTER. (*standing above her*) Pray where is your sister? We are friends now?

URSULA. (*turns, facing him—extends her hand*) With all my heart and all my gratitude.

SYLVESTER. Then take me to her.

URSULA. Take you to her?

SYLVESTER. Yes—at Lord Hassenden's. We shall find Blimboe there and you and he shall witness my apology.

URSULA. I—I can't take you to her. She—she's — (*turns her back to him*)

SYLVESTER. (R. C. *slapping her on the shoulder. She falls forward a step*) Come—come—she wasn't unwilling to see me before. (*crosses up R.*)

URSULA. (*confused, crosses to C., then up to L. C. by table*) No—she's—she's not unwilling to see you, no, in no way, sir. But she's—she's—oh, she's gone to town with my brother. (*takes her cloak*)

SYLVESTER. (*crosses to R. behind chair*) To town with—?

URSULA. (L. of table) Yes, and I—I must follow her at once. Indeed I have stayed too long already.

SYLVESTER. (*crosses to L. c.*) For your convenience, perhaps, not for my pleasure. As for Lady Ursula—— (*catches hold of her hat as she picks it up—retains her by hat*)

(*Enter MILLS R.*)

MILLS. (*R. at door*) Do you wish the chaise to wait any longer, Sir George? Are you going to town?

SYLVESTER. Going to town? Yes, I'm going to town. But your chaise is here, Mr. Barrington.

URSULA. (*down L. puzzled*) Yes!

SYLVESTER. And you go to town?

(*URSULA hesitates.*)

You said as much this instant.

URSULA. Oh yes, I—I'm going to town.

SYLVESTER. (*catching her arm*) By heaven, we'll go together! (*takes her hands, and pulls her L. c.*) Together we'll seek your brother, and end this silly quarrel. Thank God it's done. I always hated it. And then—why, then we'll beg to see your sister—she shall not deny it or I will fall into a most damnable faint—and we'll obtain leave to do as we will with that likeness of hers in your wardrobe. Come, what say you?

(*URSULA hesitates—he holds her.*)

Oh, we're friends now—you can't refuse. (*to MILLS*) Put my chaise back, Mills—I ride with Mr. Barrington.

(*URSULA sinks into her chair L. c.*)

Why, are you fainting now? (*laughs, fans her with hat*) There's no need, you're in the house already!

(MILLS *crosses to L. and stands L.*)

URSULA. Thank you—I—I'm very well. For a moment I felt——

SYLVESTER. Faint, eh?

(URSULA *takes her hat and replaces in on table*)

Gad, Mr. Barrington, it's in the family! Are you well enough to drive with me? If not, pray rest here to-night. Indeed, I shall be honoured. (*crosses up behind table R. C.*)

(URSULA *jumps up.*)

I'll postpone my journey and keep you company.

URSULA. No—no—I——

SYLVESTER. Pray let me bid them prepare a room. (*L. of her*)

URSULA. No, no, not for the world! Indeed, sir——

SYLVESTER. Call me Sylvester. (*about to slap her on back again, she dodges down to R.*)

URSULA. (*R. C.*) Indeed, Sylvester—with all thanks to you, Sylvester, I would rather go to town with you, Sylvester, than stay here with you, Sylvester.

SYLVESTER. (*C.*) You don't love my house so much as your sister does! (*digs her in ribs*) Well, I forgive you—no doubt you have business.

(MILLS *pours out wine.*)

(SYLVESTER *standing above table*, URSULA *sits R. of table.*)

Drink a glass of wine while you wait, for I must beg a quarter of an hour in which to change my dress. (*crosses to L. above table—to MILLS*) Mr. Barrington's chaise in twenty minutes.

MILLS. (*crosses to R.*) Yes, Sir George.

(MILLS *goes off R. 2 E.*)

SYLVESTER. (*to URSULA who is sitting by table in bewilderment*) I'll lose no time. (*coming down L. of table, crosses to C.*) On my soul, Mr. Barrington, I'm rejoiced that the affair ends so happily—(*going R.*) I wouldn't have killed your brother for—(*pauses and laughs*) Why—even for the sake of the likeness in the wardrobe. I'll be with you again directly. (*slaps her on shoulder.*)

(SYLVESTER *goes off R.*)

(*A pause.* URSULA *sits still a moment.*)

URSULA. (*springing up*) Ends happily! Heaven help me, it ends neither happily nor at all! I must go to London with him, must I? Seek my brother with him, find my brother with him? Seek my sister with him, find my sister with him? Or if I make my escape and go home—why he'll get first to Frank and tell Frank—oh—and tell Frank that Walter has a pretty leg! What shall I do? Another time every man in the world shall kill every other before on their account I put on—what I wear now. Yet I would not have Frank hurt—(*smiles*) no, nor

Sir George—(*goes up R., looks off*) nor Sir George! What was that he said? A handsome face—a good shape—a pretty—oh, he'll be back, I won't wait for him. I'll go now to London to Frank—I must tell Frank myself. Sir George's chaise is put back, I shall have ten minutes start. (*moves above table to down L. stealthily to table, takes up hat and turning*) I must get first to Frank! Quilton! Quilton! (*reaches door L.*)

(*At that moment BLIMBOE enters—they come into collision.*)

BLIMBOE. (*L. below table*) Sir—I—I beg your pardon.

URSULA. (*above door L. 2 E.*) (*hastily*) Oh, the blame is mine. (*wraps cloak half way over her face*) Your servant, sir, your servant.

(*URSULA bows and goes off hastily*)

(*BLIMBOE holds picture L. 2 E. He looks after her a moment off.*)

BLIMBOE. (*L.*) Who's that, I wonder. Sir George has had a visitor, one not over eager to stay long, it seems! He looked a pretty fellow, though. And where is Sir George?

(*Enter MILLS R. 2 E. carrying SYLVESTER'S cloak and hat*)

Who was that gentleman, Mills?

MILLS. (*R.*) The gentleman, sir? (*looks round*) Why, where in the devil's name is he?

BLIMBOE. (L. c.) If you leave the devil alone, perhaps he'll leave you alone. The gentleman ran out as I came in—he was in haste as it appeared.

MILLS. Ran out ?

BLIMBOE. At his top speed.

(MILLS runs up to L. c., looks out of window.)

Who was he ? Why, where are you running to ?

MILLS. (*pausing*) He was to go to London with Sir George. (*crossing down to L. 2 E.*)

BLIMBOE. If he goes as fast all the way, Sir George must not linger. Mills ! Mills ! (MILLS runs off L.)

(Enter SYLVESTER R. 2 in black suit. He looks round in surprise.)

SYLVESTER. (R., comes c.) You back, Blimboe ! You're early. But where's Mr. Barrington ?

BLIMBOE. Mr. Barrington ?

SYLVESTER. Yes—yes, Walter Barrington. He was to carry me to London in his chaise.

BLIMBOE. (L. c.) Walter Barrington ? Why, he's——

SYLVESTER. (*impatiently* c.) Yes, man, Walter Barrington—Hassenden's brother—and—and Lady Ursula's. The quarrel's made up—— I'll tell you about that another time—it's a pretty story. But where is the boy ? Oh, no doubt Mills has taken him to a dressing-room to put a touch to his hair——

BLIMBOE. No, Sir George, no ! Mills hasn't——

(Enter MILLS L. *still carrying cloak and hat, put on chair above table.*)

SYLVESTER. Well, Mills, where's Mr. Barrington ? Is he ready ?

MILLS. (*putting down cloak and hat above table*) He's gone, Sir George.

SYLVESTER. (*crosses to L. c.*) Gone ! Gone ! Where to ? How—when—why ?

(BLIMBOE *crosses to R.*)

MILLS. To town as I judge, Sir George, by the turn they took in his chaise, Sir George, at a gallop, Sir George, but why, God knows, Sir George !

SYLVESTER. (*by table L.*) Did he leave no explanation ?

MILLS. No, Sir George.

SYLVESTER. No message ?

MILLS. No, Sir George.

SYLVESTER. No apology ?

MILLS. No, Sir George.

SYLVESTER. (*sinks into chair R. of table L.*) No excuse ?

MILLS. No, Sir George. Can I do anything, Sir George ?

SYLVESTER. Yes—go—go to the devil after Mr. Barrington.

MILLS. (*alarmed*) Yes, Sir George.

(MILLS *goes off L. 2 E.*)

BLIMBOE. (*R. by chair*) My dear friend, what's the meaning of this ? Who is this Mr. Walter—

SYLVESTER. (*jumping up, crosses down R.*) Why, he's the impudent brother of an impudent sister, and I'll be revenged on both of them.

(BLIMBOE *sits R.*)

(*walks up stage to BLIMBOE*) You should have heard him. So pretty in his pleading, so anxious for a reconciliation, so friendly, so cordial in his sentiments. We were to go to town together. (*crosses to door L., then around table to R., then to C. during speech*) To meet Lady Ursula—oh, a plague on all the family together. And now he leaves me in the lurch, without a word, without an excuse! I've done with his brother, but I'll be revenged on him! By my soul, I won't be made a fool of by all the family in turn!

BLIMBOE. Stop—stop! (*rises, follows SIR GEORGE to L. then to R.*) My dear Sir George, by talking so fast you exhaust yourself without informing me. You say this gentleman was Mr. Walter Barrington? (*stands R.*)

SYLVESTER. (*impatiently*) Yes, yes, yes! (*flings himself into chair R. of table*)

BLIMBOE. No, no, no! Mr. Walter Barrington is still abroad. (*crosses to L.*)

SYLVESTER. (*sitting R. of table*) No, no; he arrived home to-day—and came over from Lord Hassenden's to see me.

BLIMBOE. (*sits L. of table*) Hum! That's not what is thought at Lord Hassenden's. They believe

him to be still in France. Mrs. Fenton told me so herself.

SYLVESTER. What—still in France? Does Lady Ursula—but I forgot—you haven't seen Lady Ursula.

BLIMBOE. (*rises to SYLVESTER*) No—she was—— (*sits again crushed*)

SYLVESTER. I know—she was gone to London with Lord Hassenden?

BLIMBOE. To London, no, no! my dear friend, you're mistaken, indeed you are. Lady Ursula has not gone to London with her brother, but gone to bed with a headache.

(*They look at each other.*)

SYLVESTER. What? What's that you say?

BLIMBOE. I only say what Miss Fenton and her aunt both told me, as an excuse for the lady's absence.

SYLVESTER. Well, I've been made a fool of again, and by a boy without a hair on his chin. Ah, if you want a duel, you shall have it now, friend Blimboe—aye, though he's Lady Ursula's brother.

BLIMBOE. Though he's——?

SYLVESTER. Yes—yes. I have no more anger against her. He's my game now.

BLIMBOE. But he's in France.

SYLVESTER. Nonsense, man! Do the ladies always know where the men of the house are?

BLIMBOE. It seems that here they don't know even where the ladies of the house are. For certainly

Lady Ursula cannot be both in bed with a headache, and gone to London with her brother.

(Pause. They rise, look at each other, then sit—look at each other again.)

SYLVESTER. It's mysterious! Pray, Blimboe, what do you think?

BLIMBOE. Oh, I know nothing of the ways of women.

SYLVESTER. Hum! I thought I knew everything. *(Rises to c.)* Oh, but it can't be! It's absurd!

BLIMBOE. *(jumping up)* What's absurd? *(follows him)*

SYLVESTER. *(goes R.)* By gad he blushed—he blushed when——

BLIMBOE. When—what?

(Enter MILLS L. He comes to L. C. holding small lace handkerchief in his hand, turns to BLIMBOE.)

MILLS. Mr. Blimboe, sir, is this your handkerchief? *(holds it up)*

BLIMBOE. My handkerchief? That—no! *(takes from pocket a very large bandanna and holds it up)* This is my handkerchief.

MILLS. *(to SYLVESTER)* Is it yours, Sir George?

SYLVESTER. No! *(takes out large but fine handkerchief, and holds it up)* Here is my handkerchief!

MILLS. (*L. taking out his handkerchief*) And certainly it is not mine, Sir George.

BLIMBOE. (*L. c. takes handkerchief from MILLS—examining it*) It looks like—like what—what I conceive might be—a—a lady's handkerchief!

SYLVESTER. (*C.*) Let's see! (*snatches and examines it, crosses to L. c.*)

(*BLIMBOE crosses behind him to C.*)

Yes, a lady's. Perhaps one of the trifles in his wardrobe which that puppy sometimes wears!

BLIMBOE. (*C. looking over his shoulder pointing*) Ah! Isn't that a mark on the corner?

SYLVESTER. What—where? Yes, it's a mark. The Barrington crest!

BLIMBOE. And no name?

SYLVESTER. (*looking again, then crushing handkerchief in his hand and hesitating*) No—no! No name.

(*BLIMBOE and MILLS looking at him.*)

Good-night, Blimboe, good-night; Mills—my chaise at once!

(*Exit MILLS L. 2 E.*)

(*SYLVESTER goes up L. of table, puts on hat and takes cloak, comes down C.*)

BLIMBOE. (*R. C.*) You'll tell me——?

SYLVESTER. (*coming down R. of table*) What? (*looks again covertly at handkerchief*)

BLIMBOE. (*R. also tries to see handkerchief*) If you find out anything.

SYLVESTER. (*goes down stage R. C.*) Yes, yes!

(BLIMBOE *goes L. C., gets candlestick, comes back, tries to see handkerchief.*)

BLIMBOE. Good-night.

(SYLVESTER *follows him to exit—crosses to R.*)

(BLIMBOE *exits off R. 2 E.*)

SYLVESTER. (*crosses to L. of table*) The Barrington crest, and by heaven—Ursula! Does he carry his sister's handkerchief? Mills, the chaise, the chaise! What else is there in that wardrobe? Mills, I say—Mills!

(*Enter MILLS L. 2 E.*)

MILLS. The chaise, Sir George? Shall I take charge of the handkerchief? (*about to take handkerchief*)

SYLVESTER. (*L.*) No, no! I'll keep the handkerchief. The chaise, deuce take you, sir! The chaise!

(MILLS *exits L. 2 E.*)

(SYLVESTER *goes L., stops, turns, holds out handkerchief and laughs.*)

Another duel then! And this time—I choose the weapons, Lady Ursula!

(*Exit SYLVESTER L. 2 E.*)

QUICK CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE.—LORD HASSENDEN'S lodgings in London, near St. James' Palace. A door up R. L. Centre, a large round table set with dessert and decanters.

TIME.—10 p.m.

(Discovered HASSENDEN, sits at head, on his R. DENT L., CASTLETON L., above WARD, CLIFFORD C. DEVEREUX below table and WARD down L. round the table. They are drinking. HASSENDEN in full uniform. DENT in private dress, the rest in undress or mess uniform. As curtain rises HASSENDEN gets up.)

DEVEREUX. What, leaving us, Hassenden ?

HASSENDEN. (*at head of table*) Pray, gentlemen, don't disturb yourselves. The evening is young, and although duty calls me away, I should grieve to spoil your entertainment.

(DENT *half rises.*)

No, I insist. (*presses him back into his seat*)

DENT. (*up R. of table*) But how long is your guard ?

HASSENDEN. Till twelve o'clock.

WARD. (*down L. of table*) By gad, we'll wait for you. Won't we, Castleton ?

CASTLETON. (*up L. of table*) With all my heart—if his cellar holds out against our attack.

CLIFFORD. (*C. sitting*) We'll make a breach in its walls!

HASSENDEN. No, no, you mustn't wait—I shan't be returning. I have ordered my horse to be ready for me at the door of the guard-room, and I shall ride direct to Edgware.

DEVEREUX. (*below table L. sitting*) To Edgware?

CLIFFORD. To-night?

HASSENDEN. Without disrespect to you, friends, I have reasons for wishing to return home at once.

DEVEREUX. The usual reason, Hassenden?

DENT. We can guess it—a lady, eh?

(*They laugh.*)

HASSENDEN. Yes, a lady——

(*All laugh.*)

The lady whom I hope soon to present to you as Lady Hassenden.

(*All rise and bow.*)

CLIFFORD. Oh, your pardon, your pardon!

HASSENDEN. She is our guest now.

(*All reseal themselves.*)

DENT. You're well excused then, and we mustn't press you to rejoin us.

HASSENDEN. And, as you know, Castleton, I have a special reason for wishing to see her as soon as possible to-morrow. (*goes R. to fetch his hat which lies on a small table R. C.*)

(WARD rises, takes candle from large table, places it on side table L., gets bottle.)

CASTLETON. I know, Frank, I know. (*rises and follows him to R. C., leaving the rest drinking and talking.*)

(WARD draws cork, sitting L. of table.)

Come now, Frank, entrust this matter to me. I am your friend, and his. He comes to my lodgings to-morrow morning, perhaps even to-night. Let me say something to him in your name. Believe me, he will be eager for a reconciliation; his reputation makes it easy for him to meet you half way.

HASSENDEN. Yes, but impossible for me to travel my half of the road; I'm obliged to you, Jack, sincerely obliged, but I must pay my debts—and my sister's. Nothing can be done—the affair must go on. (*looks at watch, then hastily*) My hour's past. Good-night, Jack. (*shakes his hand, goes up R.*) Good-night, friends, good-night.

ALL. (*at the table*) Good-night, good night.

(HASSENDEN goes off R.)

(CASTLETON to table, sits at head of table and takes wine.)

DENT. Our host seems anxious—at least not in his usual spirits.

CASTLETON. He has a troublesome affair on hand.

DEVEREUX. (*rises, back a step down L.*) An affair? Of this sort? (*imitating fencing with DENT—using stems of pipes*)

CASTLETON. I'll tell you nothing. I still hope that it may be arranged.

WARD. (*rises, reaches for tobacco, fills pipe*) At least, Jack, let's have no Joicey and McArthur over here. It's well enough for the Irish, but in faith, in a Christian country, it's nothing but sheer murder. (*lights pipe and sits*)

DENT. Murder! No, no, Ward. It's a pretty taking of an even chance—a very gentlemanly throw with fortune. And it has a fine excitement in it.

DEVEREUX. (*rises, goes to L. below table*) It kills one man for certain—that's praise enough in Dent's eyes. (*fills pipe, stands L.*)

DENT. If you fight across the table, and load both pistols, why I grant you it's murder, and that in an indiscriminate fashion. But with one pistol empty, come, you'll allow that it's a nice test of a gentleman's coolness and so should be countenanced.

CLIFFORD. (*sitting C.*) So long as my countenance is not pressed into the service, have it as you like. (*taking chair R. C.*)

CASTLETON. Ah, Dent, you'd shoot your own brother with pleasure, if only the affair was conducted in proper form.

DENT. (*earnestly*) On my life I would not—not without full cause.

CLIFFORD. As—for example?

DENT. Well, that he spoke ill of a lady I affected.

WARD. Or that he affected a lady you spoke ill of?

DEVEREUX. (*lights pipe then sits above* WARD L. *of table*) Or that a lady you affected, affected him?

DENT. Oh, faith, there are reasons enough, if you start on them.

CASTLETON. (*WARD passes him snuff box*) What? For a man to shoot his brother?

DENT. Even his brother.

(*All look at DENT—CLIFFORD rises, goes behind DENT, puts hand on DENT'S shoulder.*)

A gentleman should not, in his relations towards another gentleman, presume on the accident of kinship. I do not hold His Majesty's Commission, as you do, gentlemen. But I will defend my honour, even against my brother.

CASTLETON. Have you a brother? (*sitting, leans forward*)

DENT. No!

(*All laugh. CLIFFORD goes to L. hand corner of table, puts down glass.*)

CASTLETON. Thank God! We're saved a tragedy.

DEVEREUX. (*sitting L. of CASTLETON laughing*) A brother-in-law, perhaps?

WARD. That was the relationship between Joicey and McArthur.

DENT. Then, sir, you touch on the one unpleasant aspect of the case.

CLIFFORD. (*standing L. of DENT at head of table*) Yes, I don't like that. They had been close friends, too.

DENT. Sir Robert Clifford misunderstands me. I mean, there is a natural hostility between a man and his wife's family——

ALL. (*laughing*) Oh! Oh!

DENT. Which imparts to the affair an ugly look of premeditation. On my soul, in the circumstances, I should not have been surprised if the Grand Jury had found a bill! But we'll hope for the best, and indeed I am told, as Sir Robert says, that the gentlemen had been close friends.

CASTLETON. Aye, aye, we'll hope—we'll hope McArthur loved Joicey consumedly before he shot him, and wept on his grave afterwards.

(*Enter a SERVANT R. 3 E.*)

Well?

SERVANT. I beg pardon, sir. I thought my lord was here.

CASTLETON. No, he's gone on guard. Is he inquired for?

SERVANT. There's a gentleman asking for him, sir.

CASTLETON. Why doesn't the gentleman come in?

CLIFFORD. (*puts pipe down, crosses to C. DEV-EREUX rises*) Aye, let him come in.

SERVANT. When I told him that my lord entertained company, he declined to come in, sir.

OMNES. What?

DENT. Hum! Well, if you did not tell him who we were——

SERVANT. I did not, sir.

DENT. Then there is no offence, I suppose?

(All assent. DEVEREUX sits again.)

What is his name?

SERVANT. The gentleman won't give his name, sir.

WARD. *(jumping up)* Oh, a plague on the fellow's mystery! Come, shall we have him in? *(puts down pipe)*

DEVEREUX. *(jumping up)* Ay, let's have him in. We'll have sport with him. *(puts down pipe)*

CLIFFORD. *(c. jumping up)* I'm with you. Come along.

(CLIFFORD, WARD and DEVEREUX run off laughing.)

SERVANT *lets them go by and follows them off.*

DENT. Yet, on consideration there is something churlish in his conduct. Yes, yes! It is, indeed it is a reflection on our host. *(rises, goes to R. C., then back to table)* For a slur on his company is a slur on his friends, and a slur on a man's friends is a slur on a man himself, and a slur on a man—on a gentleman——

CASTLETON. *(sitting)* Oh, without doubt! Has-senden must run him through the heart! You have proved it by the book, Dent, and without a flaw.

(A slight scuffle and cries of "Come along, sir, come with us," are heard off.)

What's going on there? *(rises)*

(Enter WARD, DEVEREUX, CLIFFORD *dragging* URSULA on. CLIFFORD *below* her, WARD *above* her, DEVEREUX *following with candelabra*. They pause at door as she attempts to break away, then pulls to C. DEVEREUX puts candelabra down on table up R. DENT forces URSULA into armchair above table L. C. and takes her hat, places it on table down L., throws her cloak over the back of her chair; then WARD fills punch glass, places it in front of her on table.

(DEVEREUX gets her pipe filled, passes it to her.)

WARD. (L.) Come, sir, we're wiser for you than you would be for yourself. Here's good company and good wine. Let me pour you a glass?

(CLIFFORD takes bottle from table, goes to C., sits astride chair; DENT sits R., and CASTLETON sits up L. of table.)

URSULA. But, gentlemen, I—I have pressing business with Lord Hassenden.

CLIFFORD. He's on guard, sir. You can't see him now.

DEVEREUX. (up C.) And after that he goes direct to Edgware.

URSULA. To Edgware? (*tries to rise*)

WARD. (L. of her) No, no, you mustn't break away from us like that. (*presses her back into her seat*)

(DEVEREUX behind her chair, picks up candlestick and attempts to light pipe for her.)

DENT. *(to URSULA)* You shall do as you will presently, sir, but for the moment we must constrain you. *(remains R. of table)*

WARD. You can't be so uncivil as to leave us immediately? *(giving her glass)*

URSULA. *(pipe in hand)* But, gentlemen——

DENT. *(rises)* No, no! Let me present the company. *(rises, bows)*

(All rise at each introduction.)

Here is Mr. Castleton, Mr. Ward, Sir Robert Clifford, Mr. Devereux—all of His Majesty's Guards. I, sir, am called Dent, and am very much at your service for every purpose, except to show you the door.

*(They sit again, except DEVEREUX up R. of chair and
WARD L. of table.)*

Will you honour us with your name, sir?

(DEVEREUX takes bottle from floor L.)

URSULA. My—my business being secret, my name had best be secret too. *(sits again)*

(All except CASTLETON and URSULA exchange glances.)

DEVEREUX *crosses to L. of her to WARD. CLIFFORD goes up behind DENT, pours wine for DENT.)*

DENT. As you will, sir; I may, however, point out to you that you are among men of honour.

*(CLIFFORD'S chair up R. DEVEREUX and WARD go to
fireplace.)*

URSULA. Indeed, I don't doubt it, sir.

CASTLETON. Oh, drink your wine, Dent, and never mind your honour.

DENT. Mr. Castleton, I am not accustomed to forget my honour. (*to URSULA*) And a secret told to a man of honour is more, not less, of a secret than before. Is it not so, gentlemen?

CLIFFORD. (*crossing back to chair c.*) Yes, yes.

WARD. (*comes back to L. of table above chair, DEVEREUX follows him to L. of table by chair*) Dent's right, it is certainly so.

CASTLETON. Nonsense, say I! A man's name is his own, to give or to withhold. (*to URSULA*) A glass of wine with you, sir?

(DEVEREUX *pours wine out, offers it; she refuses, he goes up to WARD.*)

URSULA. (*looks towards door R.*) I must beg you to excuse me, I will not drink to-night.

DENT. (*R. of table sitting*) The gentleman is not companionable. He joined us only under compulsion, he will not trust us with his name, he will not drink with us.

(CLIFFORD *goes to chair, sits c.*)

URSULA. On my word, gentlemen, I mean no offence—none in the world.

DENT. (*rises to behind his chair R. of table*) Then give me leave to observe, sir, that your behaviour might be better matched than it is with your intentions.

CASTLETON. On my life, this shall go no further.

(*rises, stands L. from table*) Come, gentlemen, a toast ! I'll give you one that we should drink under this roof. Pray, Dent, no quarrels to-night !

(CLIFFORD *crosses to DEVEREUX, above URSULA'S chair.*)

DENT. As you will. The gentleman is young, and perhaps errs through ignorance. (*crosses to R. C.*)

URSULA. I own, sir, there is room for me to grow wiser.

WARD. (*comes down L. below table to serving table, opens bottle, pours wine*) Your toast, Jack, your toast !

ALL. Yes, the toast.

CASTLETON. (*L. of table down stage*) Here it is—our host's sister, the beautiful Ursula Barrington. We'll drink her now ; if what they say is true, all the town shall drink her soon.

CLIFFORD. (*rises, foot on chair C.*) Aye, bumpers—and standing, gentlemen !

(*All stand. WARD fills URSULA'S glass, she looks at him a moment and then stands up.*)

ALL. (*except URSULA*) The beautiful Ursula Barrington. (*hold up glasses and are prepared to drink*)

DENT. (*to URSULA*) You don't drink, sir ; on my faith now to refuse a toast——

URSULA. (*above table, hurriedly lifting glass*) In-

deed, sir, I—I drink very willingly now, sir. (*raises glass*) The beautiful Ursula Barrington !

ALL. Ursula Barrington !

(CLIFFORD *puts glass down, then moves chair up c.*

CASTLETON *sits up* L. WARD *sits down* R. *They drink and place glasses on table.*)

DENT. (*stands R. of table*) Though, in plain truth, and saving your presence, Castleton, I am told that the lady is nothing out of the common. (*goes up, stands L. of URSULA*)

URSULA. (*startled*) Nothing out of the——!

(DEVEREUX *forces her into chair. All turn and look at her. She stops in confusion.*)

DENT. You have heard otherwise, sir ?

URSULA. I—I—indeed I have some reason to——

(DEVEREUX *presses her into chair and comes around to*
DENT, *who passes him to L. of her.*)

CASTLETON. (*sitting L. of URSULA*) So, in faith, have I. Why, Dent, her hair is——

(DEVEREUX *leans on chair R. of table.*)

DENT. There is none too much of it, and when not powdered it has, I am assured, a plain touch of red. (*goes L. of URSULA*)

URSULA. (*rising, pressed into chair again by*
DEVEREUX, *low*) Red !

WARD. Oh ! Oh !

CLIFFORD. (*rises, goes up R. of URSULA. DEV-*

EREUX *moves down to chair c.*) He'll allow merit to nobody.

CASTLETON. But her cheek——

DENT. Like the milkmaid's in a frost. Too much colour for the taste of the town, believe me.

(WARD *rises, laughing, to fireplace L.*)

CASTLETON. Nay, then, her mouth——

DEVEREUX. (*takes c. chair moves it to R. and sits*) Grant him her mouth, Dent, for pity's sake.

DENT. Truth is truth—and her mouth is, I believe, for all the world like a leg of mutton with a slice cut out.

URSULA. (*rises, CLIFFORD forces her back into chair, low*) Oh!

WARD. (*to CASTLETON above fireplace*) Another feature, Jack! You're not bankrupt yet.

CASTLETON. Then her nose——

DENT. I grant you—I concede her nose. It is very pious—it points the straight way to Heaven.

CASTLETON. Oh, a plague on his concessions! Well, then her eyes——

DEVEREUX. (*sitting down R. c.*) She has nothing else left—so pray be merciful, Dent.

DENT. One, I admit, is well enough.

WARD *and* CLIFFORD. One!

URSULA. One! (*low*)

DENT. But the other admires its fellow so intem-

perately that it is ever trying to see it through her nose.

(All laugh.)

(turning to URSULA) In plain English she squints, sir, like a Turk.

URSULA. *(jumping up, coming down c. R. of table, throws down pipe vehemently)* Oh, I'll not endure it! It's a calumny!

(WARD crosses to L. of table. DEVEREUX rises, stands c. placing chair back. CASTLETON comes down to corner of table. CLIFFORD rises and comes to DEVEREUX R. C.)

DENT. *(comes slowly R. of her)* You are acquainted with the lady we speak of, sir?

(All exchange glances.)

URSULA. *(confused)* No, no, I—I'm not acquainted with her. No, I never saw her in my life.

DENT. Then let me observe, sir, that you do ill to accuse me of calumny when you know nothing to the contrary of what I say.

WARD. *(above chair head of table, low to CLIFFORD)* He'll have his quarrel yet.

CLIFFORD. *(above table, sits on arm of chair, WARD sits up L.)* Oh, he won't be baulked of that!

DENT. *(R. C. to URSULA)* You mark my words, sir.

URSULA. (*R. of table*) I care not, I know it is calumny.

CASTLETON. (*L.*) Why, so do I—the merest calumny—it is told by some jealous woman or disappointed suitor. (*goes up L.*)

(*DEVEREUX sits up R.*)

DENT. You, Castleton, are allowed a liberty which this gentleman, a stranger, can hardly claim.

(*CASTLETON rises, crosses up ; CLIFFORD sitting on arm of chair above table.*)

(*to URSULA*) Sir, do you repeat that what I say is calumny ?

URSULA. (*to C. indignantly*) Yes, I do. Of the rest I say nothing, but she does not squint.

DENT. (*R. C. shrugging his shoulders*) I say she does, and since I say she does and you say she doesn't why, sir, you say that I lie.

(*URSULA starts back C. All jump up.*)

CASTLETON. (*comes to C. DEVEREUX crosses to CASTLETON, and crosses to WARD and CLIFFORD*) No, no ! In Heaven's name, Dent—— !

DENT. I won't be interfered with. (*to URSULA who has come to C.*) Do you say I lie, sir ?

URSULA. (*R. of table*) I—I—say she doesn't squint.

(*CASTLETON between URSULA and DENT. DENT R. C. to WARD, CLIFFORD and DEVEREUX who have come down L. and stand together.*)

DENT. Gentlemen, I appeal to you.

CLIFFORD. (*L. of table*) That is—he says—you lie, for calumny, I take it, is but Latin for a lie.

URSULA. (C.) I protest—I protest—indeed you twist my words.

DEVEREUX. (*down L.*) What other meaning is there in the words?

WARD. (*up L. above DEVEREUX, crosses to L. C. below table*) And he has repeated them three times. (*taking step to URSULA*) You know, sir, what is usual among gentlemen——

URSULA. (C. *moves towards R. C.*) I—I don't understand.

CASTLETON. (R. C.) In Heaven's name, are we to quarrel over such a trifle?

DENT. (*crosses to L. C.*) The matter has gone too far for your intervention, Mr. Castleton.

(*He crosses to L. and whispers an instant to WARD.*

CASTLETON R. *below her, catches URSULA R. C. by the arm and draws her to R. speaking in her ear. She is bewildered, DENT turns.*)

I understand the gentleman persists then? (*shrugs shoulders*)

(*All stand looking at URSULA, a pause.*)

CASTLETON. (R. *hand on URSULA'S shoulder*) I'll have no part in this. The gentleman has given no sufficient offence.

DENT. (L. C.) Say you so? The plea shall not serve.

(CASTLETON *goes down R.*)

If there is not offence enough, why, here is more.

(He draws a glove from his pocket and advances towards URSULA, intending to strike her in the face with it. She stands still.)

Do you understand this, sir ?

(He raises his hand ; as he does so a SERVANT enters R. 3 E., they hear him. All look round except URSULA, who stands rigid. DENT arrests his blow.)

SERVANT. *(up R.)* Sir George Sylvester !

(Enter SYLVESTER, comes slowly to C. amid silence.

SERVANT lets him pass.)

URSULA. *(low)* Sir George Sylvester !

DENT. Sir George Sylvester.

ALL. Sir George Sylvester.

CASTLETON. *(down R.)* What ! George, you here—at Hassenden's ?

SYLVESTER. *(hand on chair R. C.)* Yes. I am here—at Lord Hassenden's. If you require an explanation, I will give it later. For the present, I am here seeking a certain gentleman. *(sees URSULA, and comes down C. L. of her, facing her)*

(DENT draws back a little L.)

Ah, there I see him. *(taking off his hat, crosses above and bows to URSULA and flings hat to FOOTMAN, who places it on table R.)* Your servant, sir.

(URSULA does not answer.)

I must trouble you with a word on a matter which you can have no difficulty in guessing, Mr. Barrington ! *(throws cloak to SERVANT)*

(SERVANT *places cloak on chair down R. and exits*
R. 3 E.)

ALL. Mr. Barrington! Barrington!

SYLVESTER. (*smiling*) Has Mr. Barrington not announced himself?

(*All say "No."*)

I have pleasure in performing that office for him. Gentlemen, Mr. Walter Barrington, my Lord Hassen-den's brother.

(*All start, and look at one another.*)

DENT. (L. c. *below table*) Now, by heaven, I may put my glove back in my pocket, there's no need of further offence now. Look you, gentlemen, by the concealment, the wilful concealment, of his name he has betrayed me—me a man of breeding—into speaking disparagingly of a lady in the presence of—her brother! (*coming to SYLVESTER C.*) Pray give me leave, Sir George.

SYLVESTER. (*not moving*) Give you leave, Mr Dent? I am so unfortunate as not to understand you.

DENT. Oh, it is plain enough, and but for your coming the matter would have been well advanced by now. (*indicating URSULA*) I have a quarrel with this gentleman.

SYLVESTER. (L. c.) Gad, that's strange! So have I!

URSULA. (R. c.) What? Must I fight both of you?

DENT. (*to SYLVESTER*) When I tell you of my cause for offence which arose just now——

SYLVESTER. (*c.*) Pardon me. I have no leisure to hear it. Whatever it be, I claim precedence. My quarrel arose earlier in the evening—at my own house—at Edgware !

URSULA. At Edgware ! A quarrel at Edgware ?

DENT. (*L. c.*) I am very reluctant to yield to you, Sir George, and I thought you had sworn to go out no more.

SYLVESTER. There are things which a man cannot endure. Let me tell you.

DENT. In truth I do not like this. Coming after you, I am likely to find an opponent not worth a thrust. I am convinced, sir, that my quarrel makes up in gravity what it lacks in seniority.

SYLVESTER. No, no ! I insist on my seniority !

CASTLETON. (*R.*) But, George, your quarrel is not with Mr. Barrington here, but with——

SYLVESTER. By your leave, Jack, I say it is with Mr. Barrington ; you shall hear.

URSULA. Pray let me hear, for I vow I know of no quarrel.

WARD. (*L. of c.*)

CLIFFORD. (*between them*)

DEVEREUX. (*down L.*)

} Yes, let us hear.

DENT. (*L. c.*) What the plague, Castleton, is it your business to spoil every quarrel ?

WARD. Now let me hear, Sylvester.

SYLVESTER. (*C. L. of URSULA*) Mr. Barrington

shall correct me if I err in any particular. At my house at Edgware to-day this gentleman presented himself. He came on important business. Is it not so, sir ?

URSULA. (R. C.) Yes, it is so.

SYLVESTER. Our conversation was long, and it was friendly, is it not so, sir ?

URSULA. Yes.

CASTLETON. (*down R.*) Friendly ! why, then, George——

SYLVESTER. (*smiling*) No, no, Jack. Pray keep him quiet, gentlemen. (CASTLETON *comes to* WARD, *who whispers to him.* CASTLETON *makes signs of protest.*) At the end of our conference, it appeared that Mr. Barrington was proceeding to London. I was to go next day—to Jack Castleton's here. But for the pleasure of his company, I changed my plans. Mark me, for his sake I changed my plans.

DENT. (L. C.) I mark that, Sir George. Faith, it may be a fact of great moment. (*turns to others significantly*)

SYLVESTER. His chaise was at the door. I proposed to ride with him. Gentlemen, he accepted my proposal with cordiality, with great cordiality——

(*All look at each other.*)

Is it not so, sir ?

URSULA. (R. of C. *assenting*) I—I can deny none of it.

SYLVESTER. Thus we were to go. Then I begged a few minutes in which to change my dress and make myself fit for his distinguished company. He agreed readily. I went, leaving him in my dining-room——

(General movement. All exchange looks. A pause.)

Gentlemen, I am at your disposal.

(They all look back at him.)

Pray listen.

(CASTLETON to L.)

When I returned, Mr. Barrington was gone.

ALL. *(except URSULA)* Gone !

(Exchange looks quickly, DEVEREUX crosses L.)

SYLVESTER. Gone !

(They all look at SYLVESTER.)

Run off, without a word—an explanation—an apology—an excuse ! I was left in the lurch, a misguided fool, while he went up to town—laughing at me.

WARD. Monstrous. *(comes down to fireplace)*

(CASTLETON bus. with WARD. CLIFFORD bus. with DEVEREUX.)

URSULA. I—I did not laugh.

DENT. The denial is limited—very strictly limited. He went, but he did not laugh.

DEVEREUX. A great palliation truly. *(moves down L.)*

CLIFFORD. Palliation ! Nay, it seems to me that it aggravates his offence. *(down L. of table)*

DENT. True, true, it shows that the act was no mere whim, but a deliberate premeditated insult.
(*at table*)

SYLVESTER. What say you, gentlemen? Have I a good cause of quarrel?

DEVEREUX. A rank affront.

WARD. I never heard worse.

CLIFFORD. You can't sit down under it, Sir George.

DENT. Faith, it's a better quarrel than my own. I'll not give up my rights, but I'll yield you precedence, hang me if I don't!

CASTLETON. (*a step forward*) But, Mr. Barrington, surely you have some explanation, some excuse to offer Sir George?

URSULA. I have none!

OMNES. None!

URSULA. None that I can give.

ALL. (*look at each other*) Ah—a—a—aha!

SYLVESTER. (*R. C. advancing a step towards her and smiling*) Have you none, sir? No plea to disarm my resentment?

URSULA. No, I have none.

DENT. He is utterly intractable.

SYLVESTER. You are sure, sir? No explanation, no excuse?

URSULA. Neither, sir.

DENT. Then the course is plain.

(*All make expectant movement.*)

We waste time in talking.

SYLVESTER. Still, one moment, please !

(Gentlemen pause.)

I want to ask Mr. Barrington, this gentleman here, one question before you all.

DENT. Sir George, at the stage we have reached, is it regular ?

SYLVESTER. Forgive me. The position is peculiar.

(WARD to front.)

(to URSULA, looking at her intently) Mr. Barrington, if you and I were alone, sir, would you give any excuse which you will not give before others ?

(All listen breathlessly.)

URSULA. There is no excuse that I could or would give to you, Sir George.

(All relax somewhat.)

DENT. Then the affair goes on.

CLIFFORD *and* DEVEREUX. Undoubtedly !

WARD. To-morrow morning ?

(All look at WARD.)

URSULA. No !

(They turn to her.)

If I must fight, I will fight. But I can't fight to-morrow.

DENT. Oh, take your time. The next day, then ?

URSULA. No, if I fight at all, I fight here and now.

(A movement from the rest.)

CASTLETON. (*a step forward*) What ! here—now ?

DENT. Irregular, most irregular.

URSULA. (R. C.) I am challenged, haven't I choice of time and place ?

CASTLETON. Oh, if you insist. And neither of you are in the Service.

WARD. We should not venture to fight in such fashion. (*down L.*)

DENT. (*to CLIFFORD*) Clear the room then. Have that table back.

(DEVEREUX *above table*, CLIFFORD *to L. of table and*

WARD *below table L. go to table and take hold of it, preparatory to moving it.*)

Shall I act for you, Sir George ? (*bows to him*)

(SYLVESTER *goes down R.*)

And perhaps Castleton—— ?

URSULA. Pray don't move the table that way, gentlemen.

(*The three look round at her.*)

Into the middle of the room, please. (*goes C. up stage*) Here, if you please.

CASTLETON. (*comes to C.*) The middle of the room ? It will be in your way, Mr. Barrington.

URSULA. No, it will be between us.

DENT. (R. *at table, at lower end*) Between you ? The deuce—you fight with swords, I take it, sir ?

URSULA. (R. C.) I beg that Mr. Castleton, if he acts for me, will stipulate that we fight with pistols.

SYLVESTER. (*down R. startled*) Pistols !

DENT. (L. C.) Well, Mr. Barrington is the challenged party.

WARD. (*below table L.*) I don't like pistols in the dining-room.

DENT. (R. of WARD) Nor I. But Hassenden has duelling pistols, I know. Castleton, I shall need your help.

CASTLETON. (*down L.*) In what ?

DENT. In loading the pistols.

URSULA. (C.) In loading one of them.

(DEVEREUX *looks at* CLIFFORD. WARD *looks at* CASTLETON. SYLVESTER *starts, all look at* URSULA.)

In loading one of them. (*looks at SYLVESTER*) You force me to fight, Sir George Sylvester. I will fight in my own way. The table between us and one pistol loaded. We will fight as Colonel Joicey and Mr. McArthur fought.

SYLVESTER. What ?

URSULA. The table between us, and one pistol loaded.

SYLVESTER. Good God !

(WARD *goes up to* CLIFFORD *and* DEVEREUX. *They stand above table.* SYLVESTER *looks intently at her ; she smiles, the rest whisper together. A pause.* DENT *crosses down to* CASTLETON L. WARD *moves cooler and mugs on floor.*)

URSULA. Thus, sir, our skill will be equal—and our chances. Do you quarrel with that?

(Bus. with table.)

DENT. Faith, sir, I don't! *(crosses up R. and down to SYLVESTER R.)* And now you shall see, gentlemen, that I was right, and that such an affair makes a pretty spectacle.

CASTLETON. (L.) It's murder, damned murder.

URSULA. (C.) Let those who urged on the quarrel reckon with that.

(They move table C.)

SYLVESTER. (R. to DENT, *who is a little above him*) I meant only to disarm him—if he fought at all.

DENT. (R. *aside to SYLVESTER*) Aye, but you're in for something more now. Gad, I'm no coward, but I begin to regret less my courtesy in yielding you precedence.

URSULA. (C.) Pray bring the pistols, my time is short.

DENT. In this world, sir?

URSULA. In the same world with Sir George.

DENT. (R.) On my honour, well answered! Given a bit of luck to-night, you'll live to become a wit.

CASTLETON. *(crossing to L. C. towards URSULA, who crosses down to him)* Mr. Barrington, you can't mean this?

WARD. *(above table)* In truth I myself——

URSULA. I mean it absolutely.

DENT. The pistols then. Clifford, I believe you'll find them on the shelf there by the mantelpiece.

(CLIFFORD crosses L. to above mantelpiece, gets box containing pistols and brings it to DENT R. He opens it and takes pistols, giving box to CLIFFORD, who puts it on table and places DENT'S chair up stage R. C.)

Castleton, (goes up L.) we turn our backs and load—one of them.

(DEVEREUX, CLIFFORD and WARD move to C. up stage.)

CASTLETON. (crossing to R.) Lord forgive us.

(He crosses to DENT R. They turn and stand together over the pistols. CASTLETON R. of table. DENT below small table R. loading pistol. Long pause. SYLVESTER and URSULA steadily look at each other. DENT brings pistols over R. of C. table, laying them side by side on lower end of table. CASTLETON crosses to L. above table to down L. DENT moves up to R. of table, stands facing audience.)

DENT. Gentlemen, the pistols (indicating them with extreme courtesy); one of them is loaded, the other——

WARD. (up C.) Before God——!

(CLIFFORD and DEVEREUX restrain him.)

DENT. (silences him with his L. hand) The other empty.

CASTLETON. (*indicating pistols*) Sir George, will you——?

SYLVESTER. (*quickly*) Mr. Barrington is the challenged party, the choice is his.

DENT. Then pray, Mr. Barrington—(*motions to URSULA*)

(*URSULA looks at SYLVESTER a moment, turns, takes a step to table, L. of table, and with a quick decisive movement snatches a pistol nearest her. DENT in pantomime motions SYLVESTER; he is still looking at URSULA, walks slowly up to table R. of table. DENT moves down R. SYLVESTER slowly lifts pistol, both have pistols below the table, arms hanging by their side.*)

DENT. (*moving up to R. C. above table*) Your positions, gentlemen. (*places SYLVESTER in position R. of table*)

(*CASTLETON places URSULA L. of table.*)

Your bodies to touch the edge of the table, gentlemen.

CASTLETON. (*down L.*) Mr. Dent will count three; on the word three you fire.

DENT. (*below R.*) One of you, the other——

SYLVESTER. (*looking at URSULA*) Enough, enough, sir, we understand.

(*DENT motions to CASTLETON, they bow to the principals and to each other and go up stage. DENT up R. CASTLETON up L.*)

DENT. Ready, gentlemen——

WARD. Before God, I——

DENT. (*holding up his hand to the others*) Pray keep quite still, gentlemen. (*loudly, slowly and impressively counts*) One, two——

SYLVESTER. (*raising his hand*) Stop!

(URSULA drops barrel of pistol on table, looking at him mockingly. All turn towards him.)

I will not fight on these terms or in this manner. I have, I believe, proved my courage. But I have no mind either to murder this gentleman, or to be murdered by him.

(*A pause.*)

DENT. (*comes down c.*) Hum! Your courage, Sir George, is doubtless beyond the need of vindication. But you have challenged Mr. Barrington, and he has chosen——

(WARD, DEVEREUX and CLIFFORD move down L. laughing.)

SYLVESTER. A barbarous mode of encounter.

DENT. Ah, one in which your courage has not yet been proved. (*laughs and looks at WARD L.*)

(DEVEREUX L. above CLIFFORD, who is L. C., who laugh. CASTLETON also moves down L., then leaves them, goes up stage.)

SYLVESTER. (*R. of table c.*) With any gentleman here, except my friend Jack Castleton, I am ready to prove it in that mode also.

(CASTLETON crosses to R., leans on back of chair. WARD, DEVEREUX and CLIFFORD grow grave.)

Shall I begin with you, Mr. Dent ?

DENT. (R. *smiling*) My dear Sir George, have we a quarrel ? No, no, and I agree that you might hesitate if Jack Castleton, your old friend, were in question. But Mr. Barrington has, as you yourself insist, grossly affronted you. Come, gentlemen, doesn't Sir George owe us a reason for this refusal ?

WARD. (L.) I think he does.

CLIFFORD. (*between WARD and DEVEREUX*) To offer a challenge and decline the acceptance.

DEVEREUX. (L. C. *up stage*) Oh, I say nothing, but Mr. McArthur held himself bound to accept, and the Clubs in Dublin approved his conduct.

DENT. (R.) They offered him a banquet, sir, but he declined through a sensibility possibly excessive.

URSULA. (L. *of table, waves pistol towards DEVEREUX, WARD, etc.*) Pray, gentlemen, when your discussion is ended—— (*bus.*)

SYLVESTER. (R. C.) I will not fight thus. (*places pistol on table*)

WARD. (L.) We await your reasons, Sir George Sylvester.

SYLVESTER. Mr. Barrington had incensed me by his uncivil conduct ; I would have given him a lesson in manners. But I will not fight him as Joicey and McArthur fought.

DENT. (R.) The reason, sir ?

SYLVESTER. Will you have the reason ?

DENT. We wait for it.

WARD. Yes, we are waiting for it.

SYLVESTER. (*R. of table c.*) Here it is then. (*looks hard at URSULA*) In aiming at Mr. Barrington I should aim at his sister, Lady Ursula!

(*URSULA starts, all show surprise.*)

To whom his life is as dear as her own.

CASTLETON. Lady Ursula?

SYLVESTER. And I—gentlemen, we are private here—I have too deep an interest in that lady to suffer me to injure her.

CASTLETON. (*down R.*) But, George, you never saw her.

SYLVESTER. (*looking at URSULA, who is facing him L. c., slowly and smiling a little*) I am not sure. Be that as it may, for Lady Ursula's sake I will not meet that gentleman in the mode that he proposes.

DENT. A strange attitude, Sir George, if I may make free to observe so much.

(*All laugh.*)

SYLVESTER. If my attitude offends you, Mr. Dent, or any one here, I am ready to answer the offence. And I'll not complain if you or he choose Joicey and McArthur way. There is the table.

(*All stop laughing.*)

WARD. (*down L. laughing*) On my life, I'm not for you in that fashion.

CLIFFORD. Nor I!

DEVEREUX. (*laughing*) I'll keep myself for my wife's family.

WARD. (*comes to L. of URSULA*) Come, let's be friends. Sir George's courage needs no proof, Mr. Barrington has given full evidence of his. And seeing Sir George's mood, I think Mr. Dent must allow that he has been misinformed concerning Lady Ursula.

(DEVEREUX and CLIFFORD *come down a step.*)

DENT. (R.) Indeed, if Sir George has ceased to hate women for her sake——

CASTLETON. (*coming down to DENT R.*) Why, it would seem as though her eyes looked straight after all. (*goes up stage again to L. of table.*)

(*All laugh.* WARD and CLIFFORD *to DEVEREUX L.*)

SYLVESTER. (*down R. C.*) For my part I will accept Mr. Barrington's apology if he will assure me that he had good cause for his behaviour. Although it be such that he can't give it here.

CASTLETON. Come, Mr. Barrington, don't be behind Sir George in complaisance. (*taking her pistol from her*)

URSULA. (L. C.) In good truth, gentlemen, I had the best of reasons, but one I cannot give to you.

CLIFFORD. (*coming to L. of her*) By heavens, a lady in the case!

DEVEREUX. (L. C.) Ha, ha!

DENT. (R.) For a thousand pounds now!

WARD. (L.) Confess yourself, Mr. Barrington.

URSULA. (*smiling*) I must own it, a lady in the case.

CASTLETON. (*up R.*) I thought as much.

SYLVESTER. (*down R. C.*) I'd have sworn it.

DENT. And one that looks straight, sir?

URSULA. (*L. of table*) Why, yes—when a man she likes is in front of her.

CASTLETON. (*speaking across table*) And whose mouth is——

URSULA. Well enough to eat and speak with—beyond that I cannot tell.

DEVEREUX and CLIFFORD. (*down L.*) Oh! Oh!

DENT. (*R.*) And her cheeks, sir?

URSULA. (*comes down front of table C., looks at DENT*) Not over red, if only they are left alone.

(WARD goes to L. of table. CASTLETON up C. to L. C. DENT crosses down R. C. of table. SYLVESTER below table R. lower corner.)

WARD. Bumpers, and in all friendship!

ALL. (*following towards table*) Agreed, agreed!

(*They stand round table and fill glasses.*)

CASTLETON. (*C. above table*) A double toast now! We'll drink to the ladies—Sir George's and Mr. Barrington's.

WARD. (*down L., CLIFFORD L. of table*) And if God makes Sir George and Mr. Barrington brothers-in-law, why He has sent them warning by the fate of Joicey and McArthur.

DEVEREUX. (*up R. corner of table*) The toast, and then to bed.

SYLVESTER. (*R.*) I'll give it then. (*holds up glass*) Here's to the beautiful Lady Ursula. (*pauses*)

DENT. (R.) Go on, sir, go on. There'll be a new quarrel if you forget the other lady.

SYLVESTER (*bowing to URSULA*) And to the lady whom in all the world Mr. Barrington loves best!

(URSULA *turns her back to audience with glass uplifted, facing group. They all raise glasses*)

CASTLETON. (*to URSULA*) Drink, sir, drink.

URSULA. I drink to both of them.

(*All drink.*)

CASTLETON. (*up L. corner of table*) And when they meet may they love each other.

(*They set down glasses.*)

SYLVESTER. (*leaning on table looking intently at her*) I think they will.

URSULA. (*puts down glass nervously*) I trust so indeed.

CASTLETON. And now—to bed!

(*All except URSULA and SYLVESTER prepare to go. All go up stage, get hats and cloaks.*)

SYLVESTER. (L. C.) If Mr. Barrington will allow me, I have one word for his private ear.

URSULA. (*starting*) I am—I—(*going down L. turns away from him and bows*) I am at your service, sir.
(SYLVESTER *goes up stage, stands leaning on back of chair R. C. watching her, till all have gone. DENT turns to URSULA R. C.*)

DENT. Good-night, sir. Yet I beg you practise in future a more polite mode of fighting.

URSULA. My fighting, sir, shall grow more polite if your speech will.

WARD. (*L. up stage, crosses down C. L. of door*)
He has you, Dent. Let him alone !

CLIFFORD. (*follows him to L. of DENT between WARD and DENT*) Aye, and you thought the mode pretty, you remember.

DENT. (R. C.) Faith, so I did, till Sir George proposed to try it with me.

(*All laugh. WARD takes CLIFFORD'S arm and goes off R. 3 E. with him. Followed by DEVEREUX laughing and talking.*)

Good-night.

(*DENT goes towards door R. 3 E., but pauses. CASTLETON goes to him and takes his arm.*)

CASTLETON. To bed, to bed.

DENT. (*up R. C., to URSULA*) Practise the sword, sir, the sword. Your figure is made for the art.

URSULA. (*down L.*) I thank you, sir.

CASTLETON. Come, Dent, will you be gone ?

DENT. For a barbarous mode of resentment unduly confines freedom of opinion. Pray think of this. Good-night.

(*DENT bows and exits.*)

CASTLETON. (R. C. *up stage*) Mr. Barrington, your servant.

(*They bow.*)

George, you will follow me presently ?

SYLVESTER. (*up R. C.*) As soon as I have said what I want to say to Mr. Barrington.

CASTLETON. Good ! Till then !

(CASTLETON *waves his hand and exits off R. 3 E.*)

(URSULA *L. of table and SYLVESTER up R. of table face one another. A pause, then URSULA reels a little. SYLVESTER springs forward to help her, but she stops him, makes her way to armchair above table and stands resting her arm on its back.*)

URSULA. (*up L. of table*) You—you have something to say to me ?

SYLVESTER. (*follows her, standing on her L., goes for glass*) But a word or two. From your not giving your name to these gentlemen, I presume that you wished your movements not to be known.

URSULA. (*goes down to L. of table*) It is so. I would not have joined them, but they forced me in.

SYLVESTER. (*L. of her*) And from your readiness to fight in that most desperate fashion sooner than risk discovery, I presume that your relations with this lady are a profound secret ?

URSULA. A secret most profound, Sir George.

SYLVESTER. Probably when you leave here you will seek her ?

URSULA. Her first, and then my brother.

SYLVESTER. (*with a disappointed air*) Ah, then I fear you can't do me the service I had meant to ask of you. I regret it, sir, but I understand your position. As regards your brother, I am of the same

mind as before. Pray present my compliments to him. Good-night. (*turns away, crosses her to R. C. front of table and up*)

URSULA. (*following him to R. corner of table*) Pray wait, pray wait. What is the service you desire of me?

SYLVESTER. (*taking up coat and hat from chair R. C.*) But if you seek this lady immediately, you can't perform it. Good-night. (*movement towards door*)

URSULA. (R. C.) Sir, sir, a moment!

SYLVESTER. (R. C. *up stage*) For the service I would have begged of you is to seek your sister immediately—so again good-night. (*goes up*)

URSULA. (R. C. *following him*) You're very hasty.

(SYLVESTER *pauses and turns.*)

Perhaps—perhaps I could contrive to see my sister also.

SYLVESTER. (*up at door R.*) What? At the same time as the lady? No, no, Mr. Barrington.

URSULA. (R. *of table, turns away, faces audience*) I—I mean on the way. Why yes, sir, why not? On my way to the lady?

SYLVESTER. (*coming down a little R. C. with hat and cloak in hand*) The lady lives near your sister, then?

URSULA. (*coming down C. by table*) Yes, very near, quite near.

SYLVESTER. (*following her down*) You heard what I said about your sister?

URSULA. (*down c.*) About my—— (*laughs*)

(*He laughs, mocking her.*)

Oh, I assure you I took it as no more than a device to extricate yourself from a difficulty.

SYLVESTER. (*smiling*) As no more than that?

URSULA. As no more indeed. (*laughs nervously*)

(*SYLVESTER laughs.*)

(*L. of table*) What more could it be if—if—if you have never seen her?

SYLVESTER. (*R. of table, slowly*) True, if I have never seen her.

(*A short pause, he smiling, she confused.*)

To return, will you carry my message to her?

URSULA. (*coming to him R. of table*) With all my heart. What is it?

SYLVESTER. (*R. of table*) But do you think she will listen to it kindly?

URSULA. (*turns her face from him*) If I can persuade her, sir, she will.

SYLVESTER. (*comes c. below table*) Tell her, then, that if she will to-morrow again stop before my door, she shall be most truly welcome.

(*URSULA, triumphant.*)

URSULA. I will give your message. (*going L. of table holding him in check*)

SYLVESTER. (*advancing a step towards her*) But

what will its reception be? Is she of a forgiving temper?

URSULA. (*moves to L.*) Toward those who please her.

SYLVESTER. (*follows her*) Do I please her?

URSULA. (*L. of table*) How—how should you, if you have never seen her.

SYLVESTER. (*L. of table, a little above URSULA*) Ah, true, if I have never seen her. But should I please her if she saw me?

URSULA. (*mock carelessly*) That she shall tell you when she sees you.

SYLVESTER. (*over her shoulder*) Then you think she will come?

URSULA. (*L.*) I—I think she will.

SYLVESTER. (*L. of table, below table*) Yet in case she shouldn't, there is one thing I will beg of you. I have something of hers——

URSULA. (*starting*) You have something of hers?

SYLVESTER. Which I must not keep, because it is not by her will or gift that I have it.

URSULA. But I—I can't think what it is. (*catching herself up*)

SYLVESTER. (*smiling*) Why should you know what it is? It was found in my house.

URSULA. In your house?

SYLVESTER. Yes—or perhaps in the avenue; she must have dropped it—maybe in her faintness, sir, or as she hurried away. But it is certainly hers. It has her name on it.

URSULA. Her name?

SYLVESTER. Yes, it is inscribed Ursula! (*L. of table taking out URSULA'S handkerchief*) Give it to her and say—if she will accord me her forgiveness and her favour—let her bring it herself to me again. Here it is, sir. (*gives her handkerchief*)

(*URSULA takes handkerchief timidly, looks at him a moment, and then turns away in confusion. SYLVESTER smiles.*)

Let her bring it to me again. Good-night. (*stands, smiling, then goes up to door, pauses and turns at door*) Tell her, too, that she is in my thoughts. Good-night.

(*Stands looking and smiling at her a moment. She does not look at him.*)

(*He exits R. 3 E.*)

(*URSULA stands a moment looking at the handkerchief. Turns and runs up to door below table, comes R. C.*)

URSULA. Has he guessed? Did he know me? Oh, I am a fool! It was nothing. (*goes up and looks off R. 3 E.*) How did he look? Oh, I am mad with—with—I don't know what I am mad with, but mad I am. Did he know me—does he——? (*lets hat and cloak fall on stage. Looks at handkerchief, then half laughing, half sobbing*) Oh!

(*Kisses handkerchief twice and then hides her face in it, falling on her knees.*)

QUICK CURTAIN.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—SYLVESTER'S *House*.

TIME.—*About 12.30 a.m.*

(*Discovered R. of table* BLIMBOE, *writing a sermon.*

MILLS *stands R. of him with candle. He yawns as curtain rises.*)

BLIMBOE. (*reading from sermon*) Therefore, brother, the world being full of snares and wickedness, it is beyond all else necessary and expedient that you hearken——

(MILLS *yawns*—BLIMBOE *looks up a moment, then goes on.*)

That you hearken to the words of my text and quit yourselves like men.

MILLS. (C.) It grows late, Mr. Blimboe !

BLIMBOE. (*reading*) And, dear sisters, think not that the text has no application to you. You also in your proper manner and——

(MILLS *yawns*, BLIMBOE *looks up, then goes on.*)

sphere of action can, and should, quit yourselves

like men. For it is not the raiment that makes the man——

MILLS. (C.) I have locked the door, sir; shall you be up long yet?

BLIMBOE. Not long, not long. (*Reading*) It is not——

MILLS. It's hard on one o'clock, sir.

BLIMBOE. Go to bed, go to bed, Mills. Leave me to work. I must complete the revision of my sermon. Where was I? Ah, yes. (*Reading*) It is not the raiment——

MILLS. Good-night, sir. (*At door R. 2 E.*) The sermon doesn't seem to send him to sleep—it will me though, on Sunday.

(*Exit MILLS R.*)

(*Knock.*)

BLIMBOE. (*Reading*) It is not the raiment that makes the true man. (*lays down paper*) It is strange that sometimes a man's thoughts will wander and the mind be full of alien images. To-night my mind holds nothing but vanities—aye, or worse—duels—gallant gentlemen to fight them—and yes, alas, fair ladies to cause 'em? Yet (*shaking his head*) men should not fight duels nor should ladies cause 'em. Our natures are perverse. Come, to work. (*takes up paper and reads*) It is the heart that makes the man, and a weak woman may have a heart as bold——(*lets paper drop and jumps up*) So I wager—at least I do not wager—no—I opine, has this Lady Ursula! I wish I had seen her, but she was in bed—why, she

was not in bed—she was—ah, where was she? At least she was not to be seen. Well—well!

(BLIMBOE *is about to sit down when a loud knock is heard off L.*)

A knock! Who is it at this time! Can Sir George have come back.

(*Knock.*)

Ah, and Mills has gone to bed.

(*Knock.*)

I must open the door myself.

(*Knock.*)

(*Takes candle from table in L. hand and goes up L. and pauses.*)

It may not be Sir George! I don't know who it may be.

(*Knock.*)

(BLIMBOE *goes up L. to fireplace.*)

At this hour there may be need of carnal weapons.

(*Knock.*)

(BLIMBOE *takes up a poker and exits cautiously L. 2.*)

(*A pause. The noise of bolts drawn back and a cry of surprise from BLIMBOE. Enter DOROTHY in agitation, followed by BLIMBOE. After door has been bolted.*)

BLIMBOE. Miss—Miss Fenton—in heaven's name what brings you here? (*down L. closes door and bolt and chain*)

DOROTHY—(*said off—coming in L. c.*) Oh, where—where is Ursula?

BLIMBOE. Lady Ursula—where is Lady Ursula? Why, surely she's in bed? no! I should say, surely she has gone to London (R.)

DOROTHY. (C.) Alas, sir—— (*crosses, sits R. of table*) She's neither in bed nor, so far as I know, gone to London. She went out—I promised to sit up and let her in. My aunt thought she had gone to bed with a headache. I waited, but she didn't return. So I pretended to go to bed—and I have run here all alone all the way. Surely, surely she is here, Mr. Blimboe? (*rises, crosses to door R. 2*)

BLIMBOE. (*coming down c.*) Surely here! Surely not here! Can you suppose, Madam——?

DOROTHY. (*crosses front of table to L.*) Not here! (*comes down c.*) Oh, what has become of her?

BLIMBOE. How could she be here? It would be——

DOROTHY. Oh, it would be—be all that it shouldn't be. I know that well. (*crosses to c.*) But where is she? (*back c.*) She came here—she came here this evening.

BLIMBOE. (*looks at her, goes and puts poker down on table and comes round table to her L. c.*) Did she come here?

DOROTHY. Yes! Yes! It was a secret, (*goes up to table L.*) of course, but I must tell you now. I'm at my wit's end, and you may be able to help me. If my aunt should discover her absence

or—oh—if Lord Hassenden should return and find her absent! (*going close to him below table L. shakes him by the arm*) Speak for heaven's sake, speak, Mr. Blimboe. She may have been murdered! (*sits R. of table*).

BLIMBOE. (*goes up L. of table, around table behind her, tries to pacify her*) You say she came here?

DOROTHY. (*hysterically*) Yes—yes—about eight o'clock, dressed as you are.

BLIMBOE. (*comes C. looking down at his clothes*) Dressed as I am?

DOROTHY. Oh no, not exactly as you are. (*rises hysterically*) But in—oh, as a man, you know. (*crosses R. C.*)

BLIMBOE. As a man!

DOROTHY. (*R. C.*) Pretending to be her brother Walter.

BLIMBOE. Heavens above us! (*drops into chair R. of table*)

DOROTHY. She should have been back long ago. (*crosses to him, shakes him*) But I've not seen her since. (*goes up stage R. to alcove, looks off L.*)

BLIMBOE. (*sits a moment, then begins to laugh*) It was she then.

(*DOROTHY crosses to R. C., looks over balustrade, then door R. E.*)

By all that's wonderful, it was she—oh, ha, ha! And Sir George—oh, ha, ha!

DOROTHY. You're laughing! I declare you are!

Oh, how can you laugh? (*comes down to table L.*)

BLIMBOE. (*suddenly grave*) I laughing! I laugh! My dear lady, oh no, I don't laugh—I—I deplore. I laugh at a thing so unseemly as for a young lady—a young lady of rank too, sister to my Lord Hassen-den—to come—to come alone—to a gentleman's house in—in—in what I wear and——!

DOROTHY. (R. C.) I know all that, Mr. Blimboe, but——

BLIMBOE. Laugh indeed! I'm aghast, Miss Fenton, quite aghast!

DOROTHY. (*goes to him, pulls his gown*) For pity's sake tell me—is she here? What—what has become of her? (*crosses to R. C., looks off R.*)

BLIMBOE. (*rises C., smiling again*) To think of it! Oh, her airs, her jaunty walk, her laced hat, the turn of her—— (*indicates leg*)

DOROTHY. (*turns quickly and comes down stage*) Mr. Blimboe!

BLIMBOE. (*starting*) I—I beg your pardon.

(DOROTHY *sits.*)

(*crosses to L. of table*) Well, Miss Fenton, I can give you information. The gentleman you seek——

DOROTHY. (R. of table) The gentleman?

BLIMBOE. I should say the lady—yes, the lady, Miss Fenton. The lady took his leave—her leave—very hastily and set out in his—in her chaise for London about nine o'clock.

DOROTHY. Then she has gone to London?

BLIMBOE. Oh, yes, he's gone to London.

(DOROTHY *looks at him across table.*)

She's—she's gone to London.

DOROTHY. But where in London?

BLIMBOE. Oh, that I don't know. Sir George was to go with her——

DOROTHY. (*stands, then sits*) Sir George with her! (*rises*) Worse and worse!

BLIMBOE. But, as I was about to observe, he did not. She evaded him and escaped alone. He followed soon afterwards in his own chaise. Beyond that I know nothing.

(*Pause. DOROTHY sits aghast. BLIMBOE takes up paper, looks at it a moment, reads in an absent tone.*)

It is not the raiment that makes the true man, it is the heart and——

DOROTHY. (*rises, crosses to R. C.*) Oh, what are you talking of? And meanwhile, Ursula may be—(*shudders*) Well, I must go home.

(BLIMBOE *rises.*)

(*crosses back to L. C. to R. of table*) No, I daren't go home. I must stay here. (*sits R. of table*)

(BLIMBOE *drops paper and looks across at her, sitting L. of table.*)

BLIMBOE. (*slowly*) You must stay here, Miss Fenton?

DOROTHY. Yes, till Ursula comes.

BLIMBOE. (*sitting at table L.*) But, my dear young lady, I apprehend—and—er—I may add, hope—that Lady Ursula will not come—not to-night at all events. It's so—so very late.

DOROTHY. I must wait in case she should. Besides, I daren't face my aunt nor Frank. No, I'll stay here. (*points to paper*) Oh, go on with your task. I won't interrupt you.

BLIMBOE. But, my dear Miss Fenton——

DOROTHY. I shall stay! (*turns to him*) Pray don't discuss it with me. I do you no harm, Mr. Blimboe.

BLIMBOE. You do me no harm, certainly. But pray excuse me—if anybody came?

DOROTHY. Anybody came? (*jumping up, crosses to R.*) Why, who should come?

BLIMBOE. If you were found here?

DOROTHY. (*looks round*) Who should find me here? (*goes door R. 2 E.*)

BLIMBOE. In a likelihood, indeed, nobody, but I am here.

DOROTHY. (*turning and looking at him*) Oh—you——! (*then goes up R.*)

BLIMBOE. And—and—now I wonder how such a thing would present itself to the Bishop's mind!

DOROTHY. My errand is harmless. (*advancing towards him to L. C.*) Mr. Blimboe, let who will come—I am only seeking Ursula. I would face all the world.

BLIMBOE. (*below table*) Yes, yes, all the world—but what about the Bishop?

DOROTHY. (R.) I am not afraid. Let all the world——

(*Knock—heard off L.*)

(*Bus.*) Hush, a knock! Oh, that must be Ursula! Thank heaven—I'll run and let her—— (*runs down L., crosses to front of table L.*)

BLIMBOE. (*intercepts her—below table*) It can't be Ursula—she won't come back.

DOROTHY. (*very loudly*) Not Ursula! Not Ursula!

(*BLIMBOE hushes her, whisperingly.*)

Then who is it? I can't be seen—I can't be—— (*crosses up L. C.*)

BLIMBOE. (*loudly*) But you said just now——

DOROTHY. (*hushes him—catches his arm, pulls him up L. behind table to L. C.*)

(*He catches hold of chair L. C., pulls it over, and falls exhausted on chest up L.*)

Just now? Oh, what does it matter what I said just now. You must hide me.

(*BLIMBOE goes up.*)

If it's not Ursula! See, behind that curtain there! If it's Ursula I'll come out, if it's anybody else, you must send them away and——

(*Knock—push.*)

BLIMBOE. But if it's Sir George himself?

DOROTHY. (*runs up C.*) Sir George! (*down to BLIMBOE*) Oh, then you must send him to bed.

(*goes towards curtains*) Or perhaps I'll come out and ask him where Ursula is. (*up towards curtains*) Won't he be surprised? (*down to BLIMBOE*)

BLIMBOE. Undoubtedly!

(*Knocking repeated.*)

DOROTHY. (*runs quickly up behind curtains L. C.*) Quick, quick, or the whole house will be roused—see, here I am!

BLIMBOE. Oh, lord—oh, lord! (*crosses to door with candle*).

(*Knocks and bolts.*)

(*She runs back—goes behind curtains and peeps out.*)

(*BLIMBOE rises, stands a minute, shakes his head, takes candle and exits off L. 2 E.*)

(*A pause. DOROTHY looks out from curtains.*)

BLIMBOE. Who is it? Who is it? (*chain*)

HASSENDEN. Open the door!

BLIMBOE. You can't come in. (*speaks expostulatory*)

HASSENDEN. (*speaking off L. 2 E.*) But I will come in, sir.

(*Drop chain.*)

Stand aside.

BLIMBOE. You can't come in.

DOROTHY. (*peeping out*) Mercy, it's Frank! Oh, if he found me here! (*hides*)

(*Enter HASSENDEN impetuously, followed by BLIMBOE.*)

HASSENDEN *in riding dress and spattered with mud.*
He crosses to R. C. in front of table.)

HASSENDEN. (*coming down*) Now, sir, you are a parson——

BLIMBOE. (*L. looking round nervously, then putting candle down on table and coming L., still holding poker*) A Clerk in Holy Orders, my lord, at your service.

HASSENDEN. (*C. crosses up R. and back to table L.*) Then, sir, it ill becomes you to screen villainy or to live in a house where villainy is practised.

BLIMBOE. (*L. of table L.*) Villainy!

HASSENDEN. (*places cloak on settle up R.*) Aye, sir, rank villainy. The lady may have been rash and indiscreet——

BLIMBOE. (*up by fireplace comes C.*) Indeed since you say so——

HASSENDEN. Peace, sir. It is worse villainy to take advantage of her innocence. I ask you, sir, where is my—(*goes up C. to BLIMBOE*)

BLIMBOE. (*confused, comes down L.*) Your—your betrothed, my lord?

HASSENDEN. (*turns and crosses down L. of table*) My betrothed? Now what in the devil's name has my betrothed to do with the matter?

BLIMBOE. True, true! Of course, my lord, nothing. I—I—grew confused. I—I was not in truth thinking of your betrothed. (*crosses to table L.*)

HASSENDEN. (*crosses below table to R. C.*) The deuce take your thoughts! Where is Lady Ursula?

(BLIMBOE *drops into chair L. of table*. HASSENDEN *crosses up to R. C.*)

(Sits) Aye, and where is your friend and patron Sir George Sylvester?

BLIMBOE. (*despairingly*) I don't know, my lord—I don't know.

HASSENDEN. (*goes up L. C. and down L. of table—rises*) There was more in that fainting fit than I knew of. (*crosses to BLIMBOE and shakes him by the shoulder*) Listen, sir, listen! (*Dorothy looks out*) I was engaged in a quarrel with Sir George, I had to go to London—I came home at midnight. What do I find, sir—what (*loudly*) do I find there? (*over his shoulder*)

BLIMBOE. I don't know; I don't know even what you'll find here.

(HASSENDEN *crosses below table to R. C. and back to L. C., looking round*. DOROTHY *hides hastily*.)

HASSENDEN. Here, no, nor I either! On my return, sir, I found Miss Fenton gone to bed in——

BLIMBOE. Oh dear—oh dear!

HASSENDEN. Gone to bed in hysterics, sir—and her aunt weeping in the hall. And why? (*raises chair threateningly*)

(BLIMBOE *fearful*. DOROTHY *looks out again*.)

Because my sister has gone to this house at eight o'clock, and in man's clothes—so help me, masquerading as her (*puts chair down, sits*) brother! Before God, in breeches, sir, and now at 12—at 12,

sir, has not returned. Is she here, sir? Where is she? You're a parson, but by heaven (*rises, goes down R. C.*) I'll have the truth out of you, if I have it at my sword's point.

BLIMBOE. Lord have mercy on us! (*jumps up*)

(DOROTHY *hides.*)

HASSENDEN. (*going up R. C., turns quickly*) Is she here, I say? (*looks round*)

BLIMBOE. (*rising*) No, no, she's not here; Lady Ursula is not here.

HASSENDEN. Sir, I will not take your word for it.

BLIMBOE. (*poker in hand, goes up L. and crosses down to R.*) My lord, you are offensive. If I were not of a sacred profession—— (*fencing at HASSENDEN*)

HASSENDEN. I think you're somewhat late in remembering your profession, sir. I know I cannot fight you, but—— (*follows him, half draws his sword*) You stand in my way at your peril.

(BLIMBOE *raises poker.*)

Out of my way, sir.

(BLIMBOE *up stage.* DOROTHY *looks out.* BLIMBOE *sees her, motions her back and crosses to L. C. up stage.*)

I'll search every nook

(DOROTHY *hides again.*)

and cranny of the house, but I'll find her.

BLIMBOE. Lady Ursula is not here, I swear to you she isn't here.

HASSENDEN. (R.) Then there's no harm done by my searching.

(BLIMBOE *looks at curtain.*)

Stand aside, sir.

(BLIMBOE *edges up between HASSENDEN and the curtains.*)

Stand aside, sir, stand aside. By heaven, I believe you have some one here! Answer me, sir, is any one here?

(BLIMBOE *mumbles a negative. DOROTHY looks out, hides again.*)

I'll look for myself, sir.

(BLIMBOE *glances round, sees skirt and coughs loudly.*

HASSENDEN *stares at him suspiciously, he looks up at ceiling, so does HASSENDEN; then BLIMBOE steals a glance round, HASSENDEN catches him and sees skirt at curtains.*)

There! There! (*rushes up L.*)

(BLIMBOE *catches hold of him.*)

Let me go, sir, let me go.

BLIMBOE. But—but it's a skirt, my lord, and Lady Ursula wore——

HASSENDEN. Oh, Sir George may have more resources than we know of, sir. You'll not let me go, so——

(HASSENDEN *pushes BLIMBOE back violently L., he falls on chest R., HASSENDEN goes up and lays hold of curtains.*)

I prefer to know the worst. My God, she's here !

(HASSENDEN *falls back aghast* R. C. *At this moment SYLVESTER appears* L. 2 E. *in doorway, in his riding dress and boots.* BLIMBOE L. *on chest, a short pause.*)

SYLVESTER. (*down* L.) Why—why, what's this ? The door standing open and (*advancing*) Lord Has-senden here, and—

(HASSENDEN, *hearing his voice, turns.*)

and——

HASSENDEN. Yes, I, Sir George, and——

(*Steps up to DOROTHY, and moves her hand from her face.*)

Good heavens, Dorothy ! (*crosses down* R. C.)

BLIMBOE. (*on chest*) Oh, lord, help us now !

DOROTHY. (*by fireplace, R. of chair up stage*) I—I—(*clasping her hands*) Oh, Frank, it might have been Ursula !

HASSENDEN. (R. C. *up stage*) I admire your ingenuity in finding matter for consolation, madam. (*moving to R., hat in hand*) It might have been my sister—it is only my future wife.

DOROTHY. (*running down to* BLIMBOE L., *who rises*) Oh, Mr. Blimboe, must we tell the truth ?

(SYLVESTER *crosses to* C.)

BLIMBOE. Well, madam, the circumstances are desperate. (*comes down* L.)

HASSENDEN. (*going down R.*) Sir George Sylvester, how comes that lady in your house?

SYLVESTER. (*coming C.*) I should suggest that you ask the lady.

(HASSENDEN *turns R. impatiently.*)

For myself, I should be glad to hear the answer to that question, and to one other. How came you here, my lord? (*R. of table L.*)

HASSENDEN. (*R.*) I came to seek my sister.

DOROTHY. (*L. of table, with BLIMBOE*) So did I, Frank.

HASSENDEN. (*to DOROTHY*) You knew she came here, then?

DOROTHY. Oh, dear! (*turns again to BLIMBOE, who takes her hand and pats it*)

HASSENDEN. (*to SYLVESTER*) And you, sir, knew that my sister came here?

SYLVESTER. (*C.*) No, my lord, I know nothing. I may have my opinion.

HASSENDEN. And that she is here?

BLIMBOE. (*at door L., starting up*) No, no!

SYLVESTER. (*up C., puts cloak and hat on chair of R. table*) Pray don't interpose, Mr. Blimboe.

(BLIMBOE, *crestfallen, goes up, sits in chair facing fireplace.*)

At last I can meet Lord Hassenden without an intermediary. (*to HASSENDEN*) The house lies open to you, my lord. Pray search it. You have found one lady here. You may find another. Who knows,

who knows? Ladies come even to houses where their presence is least looked for, and in no way invited. You and I know that, my lord. Blimboe, pray take a candle and guide Lord Hassenden. That door, my lord——

(HASSENDEN *moves, irritated.* BLIMBOE *rises slowly, comes L., takes candle. Pointing R.*)

gives access to the stairs. I beg you to search—— search thoroughly. For all I know, the whole village may be in hiding in my house.

HASSENDEN. I will go.

(BLIMBOE *crosses R.*)

I do not trust you.

(Goes C. to SYLVESTER, looks at him, going to door R. 2 E.)

(SYLVESTER *bows low.*)

BLIMBOE. My lord!

(HASSENDEN *stamps foot.*)

HASSENDEN. (to BLIMBOE) Come, sir.

(BLIMBOE, *with candle, slinks off R. 2 E. fearfully.*

HASSENDEN *motions him to precede him and, with a bow to SYLVESTER, follows him off R. 2.*)

(SYLVESTER *crosses hastily to DOROTHY.*)

SYLVESTER. Go after them.

(DOROTHY *crosses to R. C.* SYLVESTER *follows her to C.*)

Tell him what you know; let Blimboe tell what he knows. I left Lady Ursula at his own rooms in London about 11 o'clock.

(DOROTHY goes up to door R. SYLVESTER follows.)
After that, I know nothing.

DOROTHY. (R. C.) Oh, shall you fight after all?

SYLVESTER. I don't think so.

DOROTHY. (*by door R.*) But when he comes back——?

SYLVESTER. (*smiling*) When he comes back, I shall not be here. If I stay, he'll force another quarrel. Keep him ten minutes and I shall be beyond his reach. My chaise is still at the door.

DOROTHY. You—you'll run away?

SYLVESTER. (*to R. C.*) Yes! Quick after them! Try to quiet him. Go, go!

(*He leads her R., and DOROTHY runs off.*)

(SYLVESTER stands looking after her, then hurriedly takes up hat and cloak.)

I'll be off. Heaven save us, what a position! God help all our reputations! (*looking off R. 2 E.*)

(URSULA appears in door L., in her own dress, and looking at him with a smile.)

It would scarcely have been worse had he in very truth found Ursula. Ah, but what's become of the pretty madcap? Faith, I would love to see her! What's become of her?

URSULA. (*to SYLVESTER*) Sir George!

(SYLVESTER turns and starts.)

I pray Heaven my brother is not here; if you meet, there will be a fight after all.

SYLVESTER. (*R. of table*) Lady Ursula!

URSULA. Yes, yes, but pray don't shout my name so loud. (*comes down L.*) Oh, Sir George, Sir George, what a quiet, peaceful world it would be if there were no men in it. (*below table L.*)

SYLVESTER. (*C.*) Perhaps, madam, and I think there is at least, since 11 o'clock, one less in it?

URSULA. I will deal fairly with you. I will confess nothing.

SYLVESTER. (*R. of table*) Nay, I'll deal handsomely with you. I will assert nothing.

URSULA. (*going above table*) And I will deny nothing. (*crosses to C.*)

SYLVESTER. Why then, I will question nothing. (*R. chair with cloak, etc.*)

URSULA. (*C.*) Moreover, I will remember nothing.

SYLVESTER. (*L. of table*) To match you, I will forget nothing.

URSULA. (*C.*) You don't please me there. I wish that you should forget.

SYLVESTER. Everything?

URSULA. (*smiling*) At least, something.

SYLVESTER. (*below table*) Well, I will forget Mr. Barrington.

URSULA. (*C., curtseying*) You are swift to divine my wishes.

SYLVESTER. In the presence of Lady Ursula, but, on my soul, only then.

URSULA. (*going to him*) And, alas, I shall not be with you often.

(SYLVESTER *advances a step towards her.*)

Oh, I am forgetting my brother! Is he here?
(*moving to L. C. round chair*)

SYLVESTER. I must confess that he's somewhere in the house.

URSULA. (*crosses up R. C.*) Oh, where—where? And what is he doing?

SYLVESTER. To be frank, he is searching the house for you, Lady Ursula. (*crosses R.*)

URSULA. (R. C.) He thinks I am here?

SYLVESTER. Such notions enter into a young man's hot head.

URSULA. Is he angry?

SYLVESTER. Monstrously! Did you come to seek him?

URSULA. (*going L.*) Yes, to seek him and Dorothy.

SYLVESTER. (*smiling*) And for no other purpose?

URSULA. (*turns, goes a step down R. C., smiling*) Pray, is Dorothy here?

SYLVESTER. (*follows her*) For no other purpose under heaven?

URSULA. I—I did not expect to find you here.

SYLVESTER. (*following her*) You would have come, and gone, and never let me know?

URSULA. Yes, indeed, unless——

SYLVESTER. (*going nearer to her*) Unless what, Lady Ursula?

URSULA. (*goes R.*) Unless I chanced again to drop my handkerchief. (*crosses R.*)

(*A pause.*)

SYLVESTER. (*following, low*) Will you give it to me? Indeed you owe it to me.

URSULA. (*by chair R. C.*) How does this request agree with your vow, sir?

(SYLVESTER *takes a step back.*)

Should he beg a lady's handkerchief who has sworn never to see a lady's face?

SYLVESTER. (L. C.) The oath was improvident. I own it. Yet, having sworn, I will observe it. (*moves towards her*)

URSULA. (*crosses to L.*) You will observe it? Why then——

SYLVESTER. (L. C.) Save by the merest hair's breadth.

URSULA. (*crosses to L. of table*) Ah!

SYLVESTER. For I break it by the merest hair's breadth if—(*he comes close to her, R. of her*) if, henceforward, I see only one. Give me the handkerchief.

URSULA. (*going R.*) I think—I think we are forgetting my brother.

SYLVESTER. (C., *sighing*) I think I am forgetting my flight. I was about to escape when you arrived.

URSULA. To escape? (*crosses to SYLVESTER*)

SYLVESTER. From your brother's fury, unless he is pacified by what he hears from Miss Fenton and from Blimboe.

URSULA. (*up R. of table*) Surely he will be, and there will be nothing then for you to escape from.

(*Voices heard off R.*)

SYLVESTER. (R. C.) Indeed, there will be nothing that I can or would escape from.

URSULA. Ah, what's that? Is that my brother?

SYLVESTER. (*crosses to R.*) I fear it is. And he will not have found you.

URSULA. No, and he shall not. I'll hide. Where shall I hide?

SYLVESTER. (*comes C.*) No, no, you mustn't!

URSULA. Yes, but I will. I would not have him find me here. Where shall I hide? (*looks round*) Ah, the curtains! (*runs up C.*)

SYLVESTER (*pursuing her to C.*) No, no, in heaven's name not the curtains!

URSULA. (*pausing a moment*) Why not?

SYLVESTER. Because—because Miss——

(*Voices heard again off R. 2 E.*)

URSULA. There is no time for anything else. See, I'm hidden safe! (*gets behind curtains L. C.*)

SYLVESTER. (*to L. of sofa up R. C.*) Yes, so was Miss Dorothy!

(*Enter DOROTHY and BLIMBOE and LORD HASSENDEN.*)

SYLVESTER *turns and comes down hastily as HASSENDEN enters R., followed by DOROTHY and BLIMBOE who remain R. HASSENDEN comes to fireplace.*)

Well, my lord, you have searched, and not found what you sought?

HASSENDEN. No, Sir George, I have not searched, and I will not search; I have been informed of all that has passed by Miss Fenton and Mr. Blimboe,

and (*pause*) in truth, I must admit that it is you, not I, who have cause for complaint.

SYLVESTER. I complain of nothing in what has passed.

(DOROTHY runs over to HASSENDEN at fireplace L., turns, looks behind curtains. SYLVESTER catches her by the hand and places her R.)

HASSENDEN. You, not I, are entitled to satisfaction.

SYLVESTER. (*coming down c.*) So far as matters have gone, my lord, I am most heartily satisfied.

(BLIMBOE yawning, and stretching himself, goes up towards curtains.)

HASSENDEN. I am ready to answer for my sister's fault. It is in excuse for her (*coming down L.*), not for myself, that I beg you to remember her youth and ignorance.

SYLVESTER. In my eyes Lady Ursula needs no defence.

HASSENDEN. (*L. below table*) She meant to save me from danger into which her own thoughtlessness has brought me. However mistaken her action, I can't find it in my heart to be hard on her.

SYLVESTER. (*turns, throws book at BLIMBOE*) It is the last thing that I should find in my heart. May we then be friends, according to her wish?

(BLIMBOE comes down R. C.)

HASSENDEN. I desire nothing better. (*comes*

R. of table) And after all that I have heard, it is but as a form that I beg the pledge of your word, your simple word as a gentleman——

SYLVESTER. To secrecy? Assuredly it is yours.

HASSENDEN. That I am sure of. But I did not mean that.

SYLVESTER. (L.) What then? I am at your service absolutely.

HASSENDEN. (C.) Why, merely your word that my sister is not here.

DOROTHY. (*coming forward to SYLVESTER L. below table*) Yes, and then we can go and seek her. She must be home by now.

BLIMBOE. (*coming forward R. down stage*) And so the whole matter ends.

HASSENDEN. (L. C.) It is with that object that I beg the favour of Sir George's assurance.

SYLVESTER. (*crosses to HASSENDEN C., embarrassed*) Ah yes, yes—true you ask my—merely my——?

DOROTHY. (*coming L. of SYLVESTER*) Just your word that Ursula is not here.

HASSENDEN. (*coming R. of SYLVESTER*) That my sister is not here.

BLIMBOE. (R. *crosses to front of him, back to audience*) Exactly—exactly—that Lady Ursula is not here.

SYLVESTER. (C.) Come, now, I'll explain the whole matter, the entire affair.

HASSENDEN. (R. C.) No, no! (*crosses R.*)

SYLVESTER. From the very beginning ! It was four o'clock that——

(BLIMBOE goes R.)

DOROTHY. (R.) Pray do not rehearse the whole story again, Sir George.

HASSENDEN. (R. C.) No need, believe me, no need ! Your mere assurance sends me away content.

DOROTHY. (*goes up L., crosses to R.*) Indeed it is late and we should all be abed.

BLIMBOE. (*crosses up at back to above table L.*) Aye, and I have my sermon still to finish.

SYLVESTER. (*down L. C.*) My lord, you—you do me wrong to ask the pledge of my word from me.

(*All show surprise, HASSENDEN anger.*)

HASSENDEN. (R.) Seeing your strange hesitation, sir, I begin to think that I do wrong to offer to accept it.

DOROTHY. (*to HASSENDEN R. C., laying hand on his arm, takes him R.*) Frank ! Frank !

SYLVESTER. (*angrily*) My lord, you——

BLIMBOE. (*crosses down to R. of SYLVESTER, going to SYLVESTER and restraining him, then crosses to round table L.*) Sir George !

(SYLVESTER and HASSENDEN front one another from R. and L. A pause.)

HASSENDEN. (*going R. with DOROTHY with a sneering laugh*) We have peacemakers again I see—more peacemakers !

SYLVESTER. (C.) I will not quarrel ! My lord,

you put me to my word. I—I do not like the test. But I have no alternative. Since you put me to it I will——

HASSENDEN. (R.) You'll give it? Ah, I knew you would. I wronged you. I will ask no more.

SYLVESTER. (C.) Yes, I will.

URSULA. (L. C. *stepping out from behind the curtains*) No!

(*All turn to her and start.*)

HASSENDEN. Ursula! (R. *takes a step forward above chair* R.)

(BLIMBOE *crosses up to chest* L.)

DOROTHY. Heaven save us—Ursula! (*turns, drops into chair* R. C.)

URSULA. (C.) I am here. I will not have this gentleman dishonour his word for me. Frank, for me he has done everything. For me he has given up a just quarrel with you, for me his house has been invaded, for me he has faced the contempt of his friends, for me his vow not to fight has been endangered, his vow to see no woman broken. And for me he—he has declared in public, in face of ridicule, a feeling he could not entertain. (*coming down* L.)

(SYLVESTER *goes up* C. BLIMBOE *goes up to fireplace.*

SYLVESTER *joins him there.*)

To shelter my good name he has done all this. But he shall not dishonour his word for me. You ask him if I am here. Here I am. (*to HASSENDEN* R. C.)

(*A pause.*)

HASSENDEN. (*slowly*) But how did you come here—and when?

URSULA. (C.) A few moments ago. The chaise is now at the door with Quilton.

(HASSENDEN *crosses to L. C.*)

Question the man if you will. I heard you had come here, and I came to seek you.

HASSENDEN. Seeking me? (*turns to her*) Is that in truth all, Ursula?

DOROTHY. (*rises, comes to HASSENDEN*) Why, for what else, Frank?

BLIMBOE. Surely for nothing else, my lord. (*takes a step L. C.*)

(SYLVESTER *comes down L.*)

URSULA. (R. C.) For nothing else, I vow. Ah, you believe me, Frank?

HASSENDEN. (*smiling*) Why, yes, I believe you. (*smiles and takes her hands, kisses her, turns to SYLVESTER*) And once again I must beg forgiveness of Sir George.

SYLVESTER. (L. *by table, crosses to HASSENDEN, takes his hand*) You, my lord, I do most heartily forgive. But it is hard for me to do the like for Lady Ursula.

(HASSENDEN *crosses and goes up L. of table.* DOROTHY *goes above chair R.*)

URSULA. (*feigning surprise, crosses to L. C.*) Why, what's your quarrel with me, Sir George? I protest that when I left you to go behind the curtain you

were in the most amiable temper. But, sir, you are my friend now ?

(BLIMBOE crosses down R. to HASSENDEN.)

SYLVESTER. (L. below table) I will change that name only for a better.

(Warn curtain.)

DOROTHY. (crosses R. to BLIMBOE and HASSENDEN) Oh, there will be no duel then ?

SYLVESTER. Nay, but I fear there has been one.

HASSENDEN. (R. between DOROTHY R. C. and BLIMBOE R.) There has ?

SYLVESTER. Between Lady Ursula and myself. She had the choice of weapons and——

HASSENDEN. And she chose——

(DOROTHY hushing him. BLIMBOE laughs and comes down, whispers to HASSENDEN.)

URSULA. (a step to C.) Those that your sex invented, don't lay the blame on us.

(DOROTHY goes up behind chair R. C.)

SYLVESTER. (below table L. C.) At least I am sore wounded——

DOROTHY. (crosses to C., going to URSULA) Won't you bind up his wounds for him, Ursula ?

(On saying this DOROTHY laughs, and she turns and goes up to window, chasing HASSENDEN and BLIMBOE up to window.)

(SYLVESTER advances towards URSULA, who stands hesitating and embarrassed.)

(MUSIC to curtain.)

URSULA. (*shy and laughing*) I—I— (*suddenly advances to SYLVESTER, holding out handkerchief*) Yes, let him take—and keep this handkerchief.

(*As she gives him handkerchief, he seizes her hands.*

DOROTHY *pushes* BLIMBOE and HASSENDEN *into alcove and draws curtains.*)

SYLVESTER. (*kneels at her feet*) You drew the loaded pistol—and I fall! (*kisses her hands*)

QUICK CURTAIN.

END OF PLAY.



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NOTICE.—The attention of those who take part in or organise dramatic representations should be called to the law on copyright. All representations of copyright dramatic works are liable to fees, if either money or consideration be taken for admission, tickets sold, a collection made, or where any theatre, hall, or other place be hired for such purpose. It is absolutely necessary that the fees for plays should be paid in advance, and an authorised permission obtained, otherwise each person taking part, or causing such play to be represented, is severally liable to a penalty or damages, under 3rd and 4th William IV., c.15, sec. 2. By means of the telegraph, injunctions can be obtained to restrain performances, which, if ignored, would lead to the imprisonment of the offenders. Agents are appointed in all parts of the kingdom, and are authorised to collect fees on behalf of the various authors or proprietors, and are empowered to exact full penalties where fees have not been paid in advance. It is not necessary to have a printed notice on a play to the effect that it is copyright, although this is done in many instances. To save useless correspondence it must be strictly understood that no reduction can be made on account of a performance taking place for the benefit of a charity, or any other cause whatever. Any information on this subject can be obtained by sending a stamped directed envelope to **SAMUEL FRENCH, Ltd., 26, Southampton Street, Strand, London.** *Fees on the plays which S. French, Ltd., collects for must be paid by P.O.O. or cheque to the above address, or the authorised Agents.*

The fees to Amateurs will be as follows, if paid in advance :—

1 Act	Pleas	..	..	..	..	From 10s. 6d. to 42s.
2 Acts	..	..	..	..	..	15s. to 63s.
3 Acts	..	..	..	..	..	21s. to £5 5s.

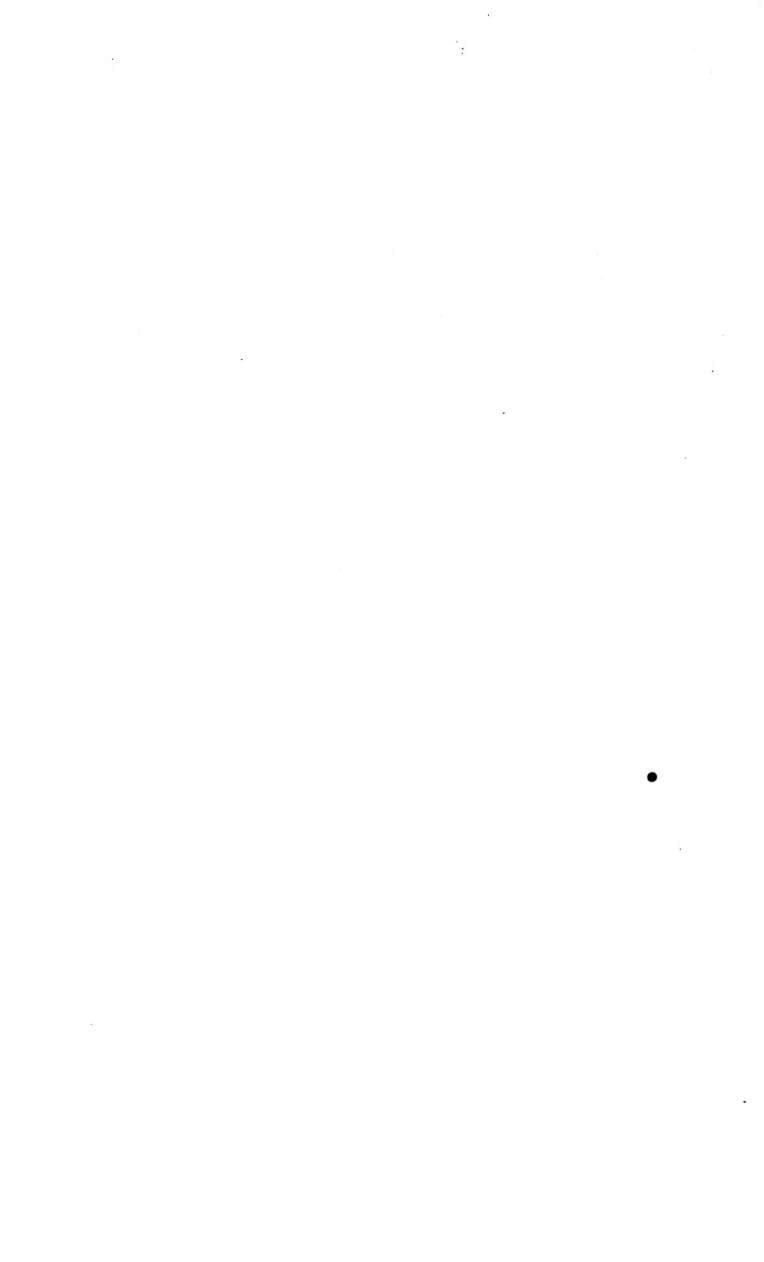
BURLESQUES and OPERAS are charged as 3 Act Plays.

It is advisable to ascertain the correct amount before remitting
No fees can be refunded.

A Circular respecting the liability incurred in playing copyright dramatic works without permission can be had on application.

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